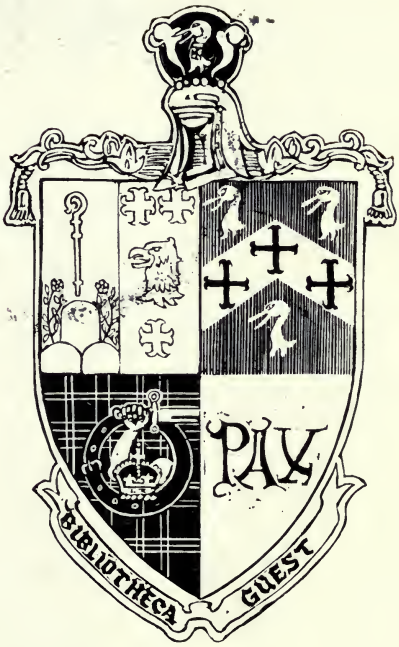
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MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS;

THEIR

ORIGIN, PROGRESS, NATURE, AND TENDENCY.

BY

SAMUEL PHILLIPS DAY,

FORMERLY CONNECTED WITH THE MONASTERY OF THE PRESENTATION ORDER, AT YOUGHAL, IRELAND.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE

REV. C. H. MINCHIN, A.M.

CHAPLAIN TO THE LYING-IN HOSPITAL, ROTUNDA, DUBLIN.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET;

WM. CURRY, JUN. AND CO., DUBLIN.

MDCCCXLVI.

T. C. JOHNS, PRINTER, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street.

TO

SIR CULLING EARDLEY SMITH, BART.,

THIS HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO

DELINEATE THE FEATURES OF MONACHISM

IS, AS A TOKEN OF SINCERE REGARD

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, PRESENTED, AND INSCRIBED

BY HIS

FAITHFUL AND DEVOTED SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE rapidity with which the first impression of "MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS" was circulated, has induced me to publish a second edition—improved and extended—in the completion of which a large amount of time and labour has been devoted. I now send this little volume forth to the world, with the hope that it will be favourably received, and that it will accomplish the objects for which it is intended—namely, the exposure of erroneous, and the dissemination of true principles—fully actuated by the potency of Luther's remark: that "Error chiefly becomes formidable from its conceal-

ment, and a detection of falsehood dispels its charm."

The interest for a work bearing specially on the subject of MONACHISM, in which the train of evils attendant upon that system, whether of a moral, a physical, or a religious character, may be delineated, becomes enhanced at this particular period, when we perceive the united efforts of Romanism and Tractarianism zealously combining—the one, in upholding and establishing—the other, in countenancing and "insisting upon the restoration of Monastic Institutions."

Whilst the thought is cherished, that this humble production may be instrumental in causing many of my Roman Catholic countrymen to arouse themselves from the spiritual lethargy, from which, for ages, they have been unawakened —to throw off the heavy burdens which priestly domination has unwarrantably imposed upon them—and to seek for *real liberty* in the Gospel

of the everlasting God—it is ardently desired too, that it may not be altogether ineffectual in leading many who *protest* against the antichristianism of Roman Catholicism, more strongly to build themselves up in their "most holy faith"—more devoutly to reverence, and more ardently to embrace that word "which maketh wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus"—adopting as their motto the following impressive lines:—

"We won't give up the Bible,
We'll try to love it more;
And may its glorious tidings
Resound from shore to shore.
O, let us try to send it
To each poor child of Rome—
And may God's grace attend it,
To call the wanderers home."

I cannot but express my most grateful acknowledgments to the Rev. C. H. Minchin, A.M., for the exceeding great kindness he has manifested in writing the Introduction to this work, and to Sir Culling E. Smith, Bart.,

for the privilege he has extended to me, in permitting the Dedication of the volume to him. I desire, likewise, to return thanks to those Noblemen and Gentlemen who have kindly subscribed to the present, as well as to the former edition, and humbly trust that the cause of truth and righteousness may, in some degree, be promoted through an agency so imperfect.

S. PHILLIPS DAY.

London, March, 1846.

INTRODUCTION.

About nineteen years ago, the Abbé F. De La Mennais published a work in Paris, entitled, "De la religion, considéreé dans ses rapports avec l'ordre politique et civile." In it he speaks of the determination of the French government with respect to monastic vows and establishments, and he complains of the constituted authorities refusing to sanction or legalize vows of monastic seclusion, celibacy, mortification, and obedience. The Church was thus restrained from enforcing those obligations, which have occasioned so much idleness, vice, and misery, in the world; and have proved, in all ages, one of the firmest

props of papal delusion and imposture. The evils resulting from monastic vows and imposed clerical celibacy, are notorious and appalling; and we cannot but applaud the wisdom and firmness of the French government of that day, for determining to withhold from the priesthood the power of perniciously tampering with the consciences of men. It restrained these clerical despots from practising upon the ardent feelings of the young and inexperienced, especially among the female sex, and from rendering men generally useless as members of society; often miserable, and sometimes guilty to a greater extent, than a more unrestrained commerce with the world would make them. The State did not prohibit individuals from taking upon themselves, or from keeping, as many religious obligations as they pleased. Its maxim was, "L'état ne s'en mêlera pas: ce sont là des choses d'un ordre plus élevé qui se passeront entre la conscience et Dieu." But fully convinced that the pretended solitude of the cloister had been

witness to as much real wretchedness, as much secret guilt, as much spiritual, aye, and actual, substantial wickedness, as the scenes of public life, it was considered an act of sound policy to put a restraint on these dens of iniquity. Is the monastic system so pure and undefiled in Ireland that it does not stand in need of the same refining process? Let the following pages, coming from the pen of one, who could indeed say—"*Quorum pars magna fui,*" decide. If they are to be sanctioned, they ought, at least, to be placed under legislative control, so as to prevent their being rendered an instrument of injustice, oppression, and spiritual tyranny. If there is any reasonable cause for apprehending that secrecy is connected in any case with coercion, there is ground for the exertion of legislative vigilance. Mr. Day, the writer of the following pages, has done the State some service, in calling public attention to "Monastic Institutions;" and his work is entitled to respect, inasmuch as he bears an unsullied character, and

his late connection with the Monastery of the Presentation Order, at Youghal, gave him opportunities, under very favourable circumstances, of being well acquainted with all the *arcana* of monachism, and the discipline to which the members of the order are subjected.

At a time like the present, when Liberalism has become infused into Protestantism, giving it a neutral or an unnatural complexion—when Romanism and Tractarianism are going hand in hand, and working with all the attachment and affection of brotherhood—"*par nobile fratrum*"—the one, in establishing and upholding, the other, in countenancing and "insisting upon the restoration of monastic institutions,"—a work, giving an account of the origin, progress, and character, of the monastic state, cannot be considered ill-timed or unseasonable. Mr. Day relates a plain, unvarnished tale, simple in its statements, and unassuming in its pretensions. I have read the following pages with attention, carefully examined the facts narrated, and

the principles developed, and inquired how far the writer is entitled to respect. The impression left upon my mind is, that he is perfectly conversant with the subject he has taken in hand, and that he has seceded from the ranks of the apostacy with a character, even above suspicion. This little work may be considered rather in the light of a *vade mecum* to monachism than a history of the several orders, which rank under the denomination of "Religious Houses." But brief and condensed though it be, it is calculated to awaken attention to a subject big with importance, and involving interests of far greater moment than the pursuits and concerns of this passing scene. Within a very short period not a few of the priests of Rome have become "obedient to the faith;" and it is devoutly to be wished that this secession may be the first fruits of a greater "falling away" from the ranks of popery. "My heart's desire and prayer to God" for the deluded disciples of Romanism "is, that they might be

saved;" and that many a dark and benighted Romanist, whether lay or clerical, buried in a cloister or familiar with human intercourse, may have the moral courage to burst the shackles of spiritual tyranny, and to shake off the trammels of spiritual despotism, under a solemn conviction, that true Christian liberty is not to be found within the range of that unscriptural system which emanates from Rome! Already does Romanism exhibit signs of decay in Ireland; and the "Man of Sin," though gorged with wealth and fostered by power, assumes an appearance giving symptoms of approaching ruin. Grasping at omnipotence, bound by no principles, and restrained by no ties, the unsightly monster is tottering on its base, and when the word goes forth from the mouth of HIM, who says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther," it will fall, never to rise again; leaving no trace of its previous existence behind, but in the crimes to which it has given birth, and the miseries it has created. The signs of the times are sounding the

note of preparation; they seem to be the forerunner of a day of "emancipation" worthy of the name; a deliverance from ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and a prelude to an abundant admission "into the glorious liberty of the children of God!" The Jesuits, the favourite children of the Church of Rome, "those skilful rowers," as a pope called them, were never so busy in their vocation as at the present moment, taking advantage of the patronage of men in high places, and striving to turn to profit the unfaithfulness of *soi-disant* Protestants. None of these things need move us, for although they are without doubt a powerful body, yet He, "in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind," is *all-powerful*—"THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!"

May this humble attempt to expose the evils attendant on monachism be instrumental in causing many to come out from the corrupt Church of Rome! May they have grace given them to throw off the

heavy burdens, which priestly dominion has, without a scriptural warrant, imposed on them! And may the writer himself of the following pages, having "escaped the corruption" destructive of men's souls, enjoy the blessed influences of God the Holy Spirit, and grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

C. H. MINCHIN, A.M.

Dublin, September, 1844.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Origin of Monasticism. Decree of the Emperor Dioclesian. Antony the hermit. Opinions entertained by the historian Tillemont and the philosopher Synisius respecting him. Establishment of Monachism on the Mount of Colzim. Spread of the system. Ammon and his Spouse. Visit of the Jesuit Sicard to the desert of Nitria. Pachomius. His austerity. Singular tradition respecting the Code of Rules for the direction of his Disciples. Number of monasteries founded by Pachomius. Hilarion the Syrian. Extent of his fame. Athanasius and the Egyptian Monks. Basil of Pontus. Martin of Tours. The Monks of Bangor. The Irish Monks..... 17

CHAPTER II.

Causes of the rapid increase of Monasteries. Chrysostom's eulogy of the Monastic life. His ultimate fate. Elevation of the Monks. Their mode of Life. Character of their dwellings. Abstemiousness of the Eastern recluses. Anecdote respecting Macarius of Alexandria. Paul the hermit. Antony's visit to him. Nature of their interview with each other. The miraculous manner in which Paul was fed. Paul's death. Singular circumstance attending his decease. Genovefa of Paris. Catherine of Cardonna. The Popish Wafer. Evasion

used by Priests at Rome in the Consecration of it. The Western Monks. Rules of Columbanus. Monastic Constitutions of Isidore. Relaxation in monkish discipline. The Benedictines. Use of Wine. Observations of St. Benedict. Monkish Vows of Poverty and Obedience. Rigid adherence to the same. Circumstance connected with the Monk Justus, related by St. Gregory as having occurred in his own Monastery. Punishment inflicted upon the Monastics. Mutilation employed by the Superiors of various Orders. The *Vade in Pace*. Occupation of the Egyptian Monks. Wealth of the Monasteries. Method by which vast treasures were obtained. Degeneracy of the Monks. Bull of Pius VII. Edicts of Charlemagne. Labour of several monastics in the preservation of Literature, &c..... 24

CHAPTER III.

The "Consuetudinal" of Cœnobites and Anchorites. Religious Fanatics. Mary of Egypt. Simeon Stylites, the pillar Saint. Emperor Theodosius and the Jews of Antioch. Miraculous exhibition. Wulfilaicus of Treves and the Latin Bishops. St. Pier. Beradat. St. Teresa. The Nun Eufraxia. Singular Austerities of Rose of Lima, and Alphonso Maria de Liguria, Bishop of Agatha. Raymond of Pennafort. Philip of Nerium. St. Dionysius. St. Nicholas. St. Benedict. St. Patrick. Miss Nano Nagle, founder of the Presentation Order of Nuns in Ireland. Her fanaticism. Dr. Mosheim's opinion of Romish Saints. 40

CHAPTER IV.

Character of those who embraced the Monastic profession. Opinion of Rutilius, a celebrated traveller, concerning the Monks. Character of the Franciscans by Dalzell.

Mosheim on the Monastic Orders. Nicholas de Clemangis's *exposé* of Monachism and its Professors. His Character of the Nuns. Cassander's evidence of Monkish immorality. Nature of the Declaration drawn up by the Nuns of Pistoria, and presented to the Grand Duke Leopold. Portrait of Female Convents drawn by the celebrated Blanco White. Homily against Monachism.. Benedict's description of the various Orders of Monks. St. Bernard's evidence. St. Bridget's disclosure of monkish impiety. Her Character of the Nuns. Gosthead, bishop of Lincoln. Matthew Paris. Arnold of Brescia. William of St. Amour. Peter of Bruges and Henry his Disciple. John Wickliffe. Pope Martin V. Decree of the Council of Constance. Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln. Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole. Interdiction of the dead bodies of Bucer and Phagius. Gross corruption of Monastics and Ecclesiastics of every grade. Witnesses for the Truth. Necessity that existed for the Reformation. 56

CHAPTER V.

Concise history of the Franciscan Order. The distinguished founder of this Confraternity. Eminence to which these Mendicant Monks attained. Authority of the Pope. Fall of the Franciscans. Pope John XXII. Nature of the opposition raised to suppress the Order. The Writings of George Buchanan. Satire of Sir David Lindsay. Unhappy fate of the friar Killore. Confinement of Buchanan in the Inquisition in Portugal. Accusations against him. His liberation from Papal power and arrival in England. Monks of St. Dominic. Their persecution of the Franciscans. Papal Unity a Farce. Alarming Schism in the Church. Division of the Franciscan Order into adverse bodies. Clement V. Renewed war between the "Spirituals" and the "Brethren of the Community." Sad issue of the warfare.

Assassination of the latter by the "Spirituals" at Narbonne and Beziers. Proceeding of John XXII. His advice to the King of Sicily. Fanaticism of Delitiosi the leader of a factious party. His contempt for the Pope. His imprisonment and death. Martyrdom of four of his followers. Renewed attack of the "Spirituals." They denounce the Pope as Antichrist. Melancholy fate of hundreds of them. Lewis of Bavaria. The "Spirituals" deprive John XXII of the popedom. Labours of various Pontiffs to promote a re-union of the dissentients. Failure of their attempts. Final division of the Franciscan Order into two bodies 78

CHAPTER VI.

The principal Monastic Orders existing in Ireland. The Cistercian Order. Its origin and progress. Monastery of the Order at Mount Melleray. Grant of Sir Richard Keane to the Monks. Election of an Abbot. Origin of the Carthusian Order. Count du Perche. Choir Monks and Lay Brothers. Indulgences. Their Origin. Object which Clement VI. had in establishing these abominations. Inducements held forth to the "Faithful" to go to Rome at the season of Jubilee. Bull of Leo XII. Council of Trent on Indulgences. Review of the doctrine. Tetzel. Innocent VIII. Sampson the Franciscan. Sale of Indulgences. Immense revenue yielded by the sale of these instruments. Protest of Roman Princes at Nuremburgh. Archbishop Secker. Indulgences in the Dublin College Library. The infidel pontiff Leo X. Internal Discipline of the Cistercian Monks. The Order of Christian Brothers. Its origin. Extent of the Order. Brief of Pius VII. Discipline to which the members of it are subjected. Retreats. The Noviciate. Statue of the Virgin Mary. Manner in which it is Worshipped by the Brethren. Image Worship. Council of Trent's exposition of this doctrine.

Definitions of Worship to be shown to Images. Coronation of the Image of the Virgin in the church of Gesu Vecchio in Naples. Cassander. Sir Edward Coke. Bellarmine, Thomas Aquinas, and the Councils of Frankfort and Nice on the doctrine of Image Worship. Contrariety of opinions. Severe discipline of the Novices. Relics. The Presentation Order. Youghal Monastery. &c..... 96

CHAPTER VII.

Monkish Legends. Erasmus. Constitutions of the Abbot Benedict. St. Francis. Writings of Bartholomew Albizi, Monk of Pisa, and Pierre d' Olive of Serignan. Pope John XXII. Liguori's Discourses. St. Philip Nerius. St. Andrew Salus. The Monk of Brabante. St. Teresa. Her Autobiography. St. Rita, the Augustinian Nun. Estatica. Priest Foley, and the pretended Estatica at the College of St. Mary, Youghal. The Abbot Wathen. St. Dominic. Thomas a Becket. Dispute at the University of Paris. Pilgrimages to his Shrine. Louis VII. of France. Rev. Alban Butler. Lives of the Saints. Observations of a French Abbe. Rev. M. Brenan on Monkish Legends..... 138

CHAPTER VIII.

The pernicious tendency of Monachism, viewed in a Moral, Physical, and Scriptural light. Archbishop M'Hale. Dr. Channing. Martin Luther. His Epistle to George, Duke of Saxony. D'Aubigne's Confirmation of Luther's Statements. Jetzer the Monk. Monkish fraud. Burning of four Dominican Monks who were the chief actors. Dodwell. Monachism frustrates the designs of God. Tyranny displayed by a Roman Catholic Curate towards his Sister. Distressing History of a Nun by Blanco

White. Cassian. Exclamation of a Monk. My own Feelings when in the Monastery. My Confessor. Draper on the Mind. Dr. Elliotson's observations. Monastery at Jerusalem. "Gala Days." Monkish Sympathy. Sufferings of the Monks of my acquaintance. Raffaele Ciocci. His experience. Confinement of his Servant in the Inquisition. Monachism opposed to Scripture. Evils consequent upon Celibacy. Pope Syricius. Gregory VII. Ambrose. Cyril of Alexandria. Luther's Appeal. Council of Trent. Alphonsus Liguori. Exemption of Children from Obedience to their Parents. Sacred Congregation of Rites. Pius VII. The Jesuit Rodriguez. Erasmus, &c. 167

Appeal to Roman Catholics..... 225

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF MONASTICISM.

Like many other great institutions, monachism may be traced to accidental circumstances. Men fled into the wilderness to escape from persecution, and some of them remained in solitude till they had lost all appetite or aptitude for social life.

When we trace monachism to its source, we discover that it originated with the early Christians in the East, who, powerfully influenced by the dread of persecution, abandoned their ordinary avocations, and betook themselves, for safety, to the mountains, the solitary deserts, and the gloomy caverns of the earth.

During the protracted and severe persecution which followed the decree of the Emperor Dioclesian, doubtless, many individuals, of both sexes, embraced with eagerness the ascetic

life, in order to escape from the dire calamities which threatened to overwhelm them. Hence, the solitary wilderness afforded a refuge, where the darts of the enemy could not penetrate, and a haven, where the storms of adversity could not reach.

Egypt, within whose prolific womb superstition was conceived, and upon whose breast it was nourished and matured, afforded the first instance of strict monastic life, in the celebrated Anthony, the hermit, who was born at Coba, on the borders of Arcadia, A. D. 251.* This extraordinary enthusiast, deserting the spot of his nativity, and remaining for a considerable period within the ruins of a tower and among the tombs, where he performed

* One of Anthony's sayings was—"He who abideth in solitude is delivered from the three-fold warfare of hearing, speaking, and seeing, and has only to support the combat against his own heart." This combat, however, he himself found it so difficult to sustain, that in an hour of distress he cried to the Lord, asking how he should be saved? 'Presently,' says the legend, 'he saw one in the likeness of himself, who sat at work, and anon rose from his work and prayed, and then sat down again to twist a rope of the fibres of the palm, and after a while, rose and prayed again. It was the angel of the Lord—'Do this,' said the angel, 'and thou shalt be saved.' *Quar. Rev. July*, 1819.

rigorous penances and mortifications, travelled into the desert a few days' journey eastward of the Nile; and discovering, in that locality, a spot possessing a wildness of scenery peculiarly adapted to his romantic taste, and convenient to a spring of water, fixed his final habitation upon the Mount of Colzim, adjacent to the Red Sea, A. D. 305, where it is said, by the Jesuit Sicard,* an ancient monastery still retains his name.

Although it has been affirmed and believed by the ancients, as well as the moderns, that Anthony was grossly ignorant, yet the historian Tillemont considers this statement to be unfounded, and describes him to be acquainted with reading and writing in the Coptic, his native tongue, and only ignorant as respects his acquaintance with the Greek. Even the philosopher Synisius eulogises the natural genius of Anthony, and asserts "that he did not require the aid of learning."

Upon this bleak and lonely mountain Anthony did not exist unknown, although apparently debarred from all human intercourse; nor was he without followers and admirers; for numberless individuals, whom natural curiosity alone had

* Missions in the Levant.

drawn to the spot, were ultimately induced to make trial of his novel mode of life; and having embraced such, they soon experienced a disrelish for society, and remained in solitude until they had lost all appetite or aptitude for social life. On the Mount of Colzim, the first seed of monachism was sown; it quickly germinated; and its rapid and surprising growth must astonish every rational and intelligent being. The rocks of Thebais, the sands of Lybia, the cities of the Nile, and the mountains and desert of Nitria,* were, in an incredibly short time, thickly peopled with

* One Ammon, who persuaded his wife to renounce with him a secular life, retired to the mountain of Nitria, and, for a limited period, inhabited together one common ascetic apartment. This not being pleasing, however, to the chaste bride, she one day addressed Ammon thus—"It is unsuitable for you, who profess chastity, to look upon a woman in so confined a dwelling; let us, therefore, if it is agreeable to you, perform our exercise apart." Each party accordingly agreed, and spent the remainder of their lives in abstinence from wine and oil, eating dry bread alone, and, on some occasions, passing over several days together without food. Ammon once required to cross a river, but being so modest as not to undress, he besought the Lord to enable him to get over without being necessitated to break his resolution; and immediately an angel transported him to the other side!—*Socrates's Eccles. Hist.* lib. 4, c. xxiii.

several thousand anchorites; and travellers have observed the ruins of fifty monasteries which were established in these places by Anthony and his disciples. The Jesuit Sicard visited this desert, and discovered there four monastic establishments, and twenty or thirty monks. Anthony's disciples subsequently dispersed themselves over the Ethiopian empire.

The island of Tabenne, in the Nile, situate between the modern town of Girge and the ruins of ancient Thebes, was inhabited by Pachomius, another supernaturally-gifted founder, and about fourteen hundred monks. This devotee, in order that he might sleep little and with the least possible comfort, or convenience, never allowed himself to lie down, or to recline against anything which might afford him support, but sat upon a stone in the middle of his cell. And among the rules which, according to the historians of the lying Church of Rome, were given to him by an angel, and were the first code of monastic laws, was one whereby the monks were enjoined to sleep sitting, and not recumbent. This renowned abbot founded nine monasteries for men, and, cruel to relate, one for women. Frequently on festival days would be congregated together fifty thousand indivi-

duals, who adopted his austere and rigid rule of discipline.

Impelled both by the example of Anthony and his own innate love of solitude, Hilarion, a Syrian youth, established monachism in Palestine, A. D. 328, and took up his abode upon a sandy beach, a few miles distant from Gaza. Soon did the fame of this man become commensurate with that of Anthony: for, when on his occasional visitation of the several monasteries in Palestine, he was invariably accompanied by a vast procession, comprising no less than two or three thousand anchorites. This founder prosecuted a course of severe discipline during forty-eight years.

In Rome this system was introduced and propagated by Athanasius, A. D. 341, and a few Egyptian monks, whose revolting and horrifying aspect created for a time, contempt and ridicule; but, strange to say, these feelings were afterwards overcome, and followed by emulation and esteem.

The celebrated and ambitious Basil established a monastery in Pontus, A. D. 366, in a dreary solitude, where he governed for a period his followers, who were dispersed along the coast of the Black Sea.

Martin of Tours, who had been both a warrior and a bishop, founded several monasteries in Gaul, A. D. 370, and had some thousands of disciples, many of whom chose for their exile the bleak and rugged islands which are studded over the Tuscan Sea.

The monks belonging to the famous monastery of Bangor, in Flintshire, who were two thousand in number, introduced themselves into Ireland; and the Irish monks, at a subsequent period, dispersed themselves over the northern regions. Thus we behold a system, hateful in the sight of God, and revolting to the social feelings of man, spreading itself over the earth, and in its flight carrying spiritual ruin and desolation along with it.

CHAPTER II.

CAUSES OF THE RAPID INCREASE OF MONASTERIES —MODE OF LIVING, VOWS, AND WEALTH OF THE EARLY MONKS.

The Eremetical life is contrary to the nature of man when it was uncorrupt, for whom it was not judged good to be alone. As the solitary life is an enemy to mankind, (Gen. ii.) so it is to the communion of saints in the Church of God. (Matt. v. 15.) The example of the primitive Church is against it (Acts ii. 44,); and the uncleanest and most hateful birds covet desolate places.—CARTER ON MATT. iii. 1.

THE causes which operated in producing a rapid increase of monachism, may be traced to a three-fold source: namely, example, ignorance of the faith, and sinister views. The powerful effect of example may be easily conceived when we consider the popularity which the first propagators of this new system had attained. The spread of their apparently extraordinary miracles and physical combatings with spirits of darkness, must have had a powerful tendency to induce individuals, in the

slightest degree credulous, to embrace a state, to all human appearance, so specially and signally marked with the favour of heaven. Further, each proselyte was taught, that penances, mortifications, and humiliations, freely engaged in, and a world voluntarily renounced, were the steps of the spiritual ladder by which they were to ascend to the gate of Zion. The eloquent Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, who had exchanged the monastic habit for the episcopal crown, encouraged the monks to believe that they were the "elect;" and that the monastic cell was a type of the ark, "out of which salvation was impossible." He even dedicated no less than three books to the praise of a monastic life; but ultimately he received a poor reward for his ill-bestowed panegyrics. For those very individuals, on whom he lavished such undue praises, became his most bitter and adverse enemies, and were the special instruments in procuring his perpetual banishment to Cucusus, a city of Cilicia, where he died about three years afterwards.* Thus was Chrysostom rewarded for his adulatory epistles, by the black-garbled monks of Cappadocia.

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.

Sinister views and personal motives also wrought powerfully in peopling the lonely desert and the barren wild with monks and hermits; "for hither as to a common asylum, men broken in mind, in fortune, and in fame, betook themselves; the friendless, the disappointed, the criminal who fled from public justice, and the innocent who sought shelter from oppression."* Vanity, a desire of emulation, accidental misfortune, and even ambition, acted as strong incentives to the monastic state: and frequent instances are recorded of the emaciated and austere hermit being endowed with the highest civil authority, as well as elevated to the episcopal chair:† and it is notorious

* Platina has termed the monastic life, "Unicum calamitosorum refugium."

† Nothing, says Dr. Mosheim, affords such a striking and remarkable proof of the excessive and fanatical veneration that was paid to the monastic order, as the treatment they received from several kings and emperors, who drew numbers of monks and abbots from their cloisters, and placed them in stations entirely foreign to their vows and their character; even amidst the splendour of a court, and at the head of affairs. The transition, indeed, was violent, from the obscurity of a convent, and the study of a liturgy, to sit at the helm of an empire, and manage the political interests of nations.—*Eccles. Hist.*

that the monasteries of the East, of Egypt, and of Gaul, supplied numerous candidates for these dignified offices.* Hence, it can safely be affirmed, that sinister views and interested motives, gave a sweetness to mortification, an agreeableness to solitude, and an intrepidity to the mind, divested of whose influences, many of those unhappy beings would, in all probability, have yielded to despair, and put a termination to an existence, at best but a living death. Several fled to monastic retreats, whose circumstances became embarrassed by oppression ; and a vast number of individuals, whom the horrors of war had intimidated, found a most desirable refuge in these asylums. They were content to endure privations, painful to flesh and blood, which the fear of dying by ruthless barbarians could alone have alleviated, or rendered supportable.

The cells or dwellings of the monks were low and narrow (unlike the fine spacious apartments of our modern recluses), and built of slight materials : and the most devoted of their occupants, in order to increase their sufferings, would not afford themselves space sufficient to stand erect, or to extend their bodies ; think-

* Sulpitius Severus, De vita Martini, cap. x. p. 320, Dial. i. cap. xxi. p. 426.

ing it a merit to pass their days and nights in a sitting posture.

The Egyptian monks generally carried their abstemiousness to a very great extent. Anthony, Pachomius, and their disciples, would take no more than twelve ounces of bread, or biscuit, for their daily sustenance, which limited quantity was divided into two meals. We are informed that Mecarius, of Alexandria,* eat nothing during lent but herbs, and then but once a week; that in Pontus, as Gregory Nazienzen testifies, some fasted twenty days and nights together; that Paul, the first hermit, lived upon the fruit of a palm-tree and a piece of bread,

* This saintly devotee having one day killed a gnat which had bitten him, was struck with compunction at the sight of the insect's blood, and, by way of atonement, went into the marshes, and there, for six months, exposed himself to all winged and creeping insects, until every part of his flesh was swollen and ulcerated with their bites! Sozomen relates of him, that he had so hardened his body by austerities, that the very beard could not make way through his skin. This personage, when in the full odour of filth and rags, returned one day to his convent, humbled and mortified by the sense of his own inferiority, exclaiming, "I am not yet a monk, but I have seen monks"—for he had fallen in with two of these wretches *stark naked!—Peregrinatorium Religiosum, by T. Dudley Fosbrooke, A.M. F.A.S. London*, 1819.

supplied to him every day by a raven, which quantity this considerate creature doubled on one occasion when Anthony visited him ;* that Hilary subsisted upon fifteen figs a-day for a number of years ; that Saint Genovefa, of

* The cause of Anthony's visit was this :—He fancying himself to be the most retired of all monks, was humbled by being told in a dream that there was a better than himself, who resided farther in the wilderness. Accordingly Anthony sets out in search of Paul's habitation, which was nigh to some ruins that had been (as the legend states) the mint of Egypt, in the days of Anthony and Cleopatra ; and meeting no other persons on the way than a Satyr and a Centaur, arrived at the cave, and saw an hyena go in. Paul hearing a human footstep closed the portal ; but Anthony entreated that the holy man, who had allowed a beast to enter, would not exclude a brother. Overcome by six hours' perseverance on the part of his visitor, the hermit removed the stone, and asked Anthony wherefore he had taken that trouble to see a poor decayed old man, who would speedily return to dust ? The next question was a natural one—how the affairs of the world were going on ? *Narra mihi quæso, quomodo se habeat hominum genus ? An in antiquis urbibus nova tecta consurgant ? quo mundus regatur imperio ? an supersint aliqui qui dæmonum errore rapiantur ?* However, Anthony is sent back to fetch a cloak, which Athanasius had given him, and in which his new friend desires to be buried. On his return to the cave, he is apprised of Paul's decease by seeing his soul ascend to glory : he finds the dead hermit on his knees, his body erect, his hands, head, and eyes upraised in the attitude of prayer, and

Paris, lived thirty-five years upon a small quantity of barley bread daily; that Saint Catherine, of Cardonna, in Spain, a nun of the Carmelite order, subsisted solely upon *grass;* and it is recorded that some devotees in our own country have existed upon the Popish wafer—an evident proof of the existence of something more substantial than the mere *accidents* of bread remaining after the "*Hoc est corpus meum*" of the priest; yea, the very substance and reality.* Vegetables, cheese, fruit, or fish, were seldom eaten by the oriental monks; but, on particular occasions, their abbots mitigated the austerity of the rules, by allowing them the use of the small fish of the

two lions attending as grave-diggers. Anthony buried him in the cave; from whence his corpse was translated, first to Constantinople, secondly to Venice, and finally to Buda, where La Brocquiere saw it in a state of *perfect preservation* four hundred years ago!—*Ibid.*

* Luther relates that when at Rome he found priests, in the consecration of the wafer, while telling the people that they were creating God, using the words, "*Tu es panis et panis manebis.*" "Thou art bread, and bread thou shalt remain!"—*D'Aubigné's Hist. Reform.*

In the preface to Archbishop Wake's Discourse of the Holy Eucharist, it is related that Archbishop Usher, who had converted by his agency some Romish priests, once inquired of them, What they, who said mass every day, and were not obliged to confess venial sins, could

Nile; a luxury which was had at the banquet to which Cassian was invited by Serenus, an Egyptian abbot.

Among the Western monks, the rules of Columbanus were the most severe, being nearly as rigorous as those of their brethren in the East. In Seville, the monastic constitutions of Isidore were very lenient, and permitted the use of flesh-meat occasionally. So great, however, did the relaxation in monastic discipline become, that the famous founder of the Benedictines was finally compelled to allow a Roman measure of wine, called *hemina*, (equal to half-a-pint) daily to his monks;* and those of his disciples who crossed the Alps, the Rhine, and the Baltic, required a still stronger beverage, and a more ample quantity. It is true that Pachomius ultimately increased the quantity

have to trouble confessors with? They ingenuously acknowledged that the chief part of their constant confession was, *their own infidelity* as to the point of Transubstantiation: for which they mutually quitted and absolved one another! *Quoted by Fletcher, from Dr. Harris's Sermon, in his Lectures on the Principles and Institutions of the Roman Catholic Religion.*

* Every one, saith St. Benedict, hath his proper gift from God, one thus, and another thus, and therefore we appoint the measure of other men's food not without some scrupulosity. Yet, considering the imbecility of

of food; but, as a *quid pro quo*, he made his followers work in proportion.

Universally the monks were tenacious of keeping inviolable their vows of evangelical poverty and obedience. The former appeared most prominently in their exterior; for their habit or tunic, which was worn as an outside covering, consisted of the coarsest and cheapest materials; and except in the East, where the article was far from expensive, they never indulged in the luxury of linen: even not unfrequently did the skins of beasts constitute their sole dress. By their vow of obedience they imposed upon themselves the shackles of perpetual vassalage and the vilest servitude. Accordingly, they yielded readily and blindly to the most capricious dictates of those whom they were bound to obey, however impracticable in their results, or preposterous in their nature.

the infirm, we think a *hemina* of wine daily will suffice for each. And if either labour, heat of the summer, or situation of the place, require more, let the prior do what he thinketh good, having ever a care that *superfluity* or *drunkenness* creep not in. And although we read wine to be in no sort the drink of monks, yet, *because in these times they will not be so persuaded*, let us at least consent to this; that we drink not to satiety, but sparingly. *Trans. of the Rules of St. Benedict, by C. F., Priest of the Order.* edit. Douay, 1638.

Saint Gregory relates the following circumstance, as having occurred in his own monastery: "A monk of the name of Justus had amassed a large sum of money, amounting to *three crowns*, for his own use: his sin was discovered. However, by the singular industry of Gregory, he was brought to repent on his death-bed. As an example to others, the saint ordered the poor monk's body and his money to be buried in a dunghill, and forbade prayers to be read for his soul. At length Gregory repented of his harsh treatment of his poor deceased brother, and calling Pretorius, the prior of the convent, desired him to say masses for Justus for thirty days in succession. At the termination of this period, the dead man appeared to brother Copiosus, and told him, that he had indeed been in a very bad state, but he was then quite well, as he had that day received the communion!"

Nor were these wretched beings exempt from more rigid discipline and additional penances. The most trivial fault, or imperfection, was punished with extreme rigour and barbarous cruelty; rendering the offender subject to long fasting, and watching, solitary confinement, and cruel flagellation. And in the West, the rules of Columbanus, which are said to have surpassed

all others in simplicity and brevity, inflicted no less than one hundred lashes for faults of a character so trivial, that they could not be mentioned without exciting the risibility of the reader ! * But there were cruelties more abhorrent than these practised by abbots ; such as mutilating their monks, and putting out their eyes ; † and an instance is recorded of an abbess in England, cutting the nose off each nun in her convent with a razor ! ‡ However barbarous these acts may appear, the inhuman

* Jac. Usserii Sylloge Antiquar. Epistolar. Hibernicar. Holstenii Codex Regularum, tom. ii.

† Ammonius, who went to Rome with Athanasius, when about to enter upon the episcopal office, cut off his own right ear, that by mutilation of his person he might disqualify himself for ordination. Evagrius, whom Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, wished to force the prelacy upon, having effected his escape without maiming himself in any way, afterwards happened to meet Ammonius, and told him jocosely, that he had done wrong in cutting off his own ear, as he had by that means rendered himself criminal in the sight of God : To whom Ammonius replied, "But do you think, Evagrius, that you will not be punished, who, from self-love, have cut out your own tongue, to avoid the exercise of that gift of utterance which has been committed to you ?"—*Socrates's Eccles. Hist.* lib. iv. chap. 24.

‡ Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints.

vade in pace, or subterraneous dungeon, more recently invented, far exceeded them.

Manual labour was at first obligatory upon all who embraced a monastic profession, and was regarded both in the light of a penance, and as a necessary duty: the garden and fields, therefore, were cultivated with diligent care. In Egypt, the monks principally occupied themselves by making sandals of wood, and baskets and mats of the palm-tree leaves; the intrinsic value of which becoming enhanced by the sanctimonious character of the workmen, they were sold at a pretty profitable rate in Alexandria, to which city boats descended from the several monasteries of Tabenne and Thebais.

At length, manual labour became partly, or altogether dispensed with, in proportion as the wealth of the monasteries increased. The infatuated novice was obliged to deliver up all his earthly possessions into the hands of the abbot, ere he could be considered as having perfectly renounced the world he had left. Others contributed plate, money, and valuable articles, to a large amount, with the view of obtaining the prayers, or a participation in the penances of those, who were, in their estimation, eminently sanctified servants of God.

"All such," says Dr. Mosheim, "as respected the common rules of decency, or preserved in their external demeanour the least appearance of piety and virtue, were looked upon as saints of the highest rank, and considered as the peculiar favourites of heaven. This circumstance was, no doubt, favourable to many of the monks, who were less profligate than the rest of their order, and might contribute more or less to support the whole body. Besides, it often happened that princes, dukes, knights, and generals, whose days had been consumed in debauchery and crimes, and distinguished by nothing but the violent exploits of unbridled lust, cruelty, and avarice, felt, at the approach of old age, or death, the inexpressible anguish of a wounded conscience, and the gloomy apprehensions and terrors it excites. In this dreadful condition what was their resource? What were the means by which they hoped to disarm the uplifted hand of divine justice, and render the governor of the world propitious? They purchased, at an enormous price, the prayers of the monks, to screen them from judgment, and devoted to God and to the saints, a large portion of the fruits of their rapine, or entered themselves into the monastic order, and be-

queathed their possessions to their new brethren. And thus it was that monkery received perpetually new accessions of opulence and credit.*

From these and numerous other causes, wealth increased in all monasteries celebrated for notoriety, especially in those of the East, and among the famous order of Benedictines.† And with

* Eccles. Hist. Cent. xi.

† The life of St. Benedict, founder of this order, has been written by no less a personage than Pope Gregory the Great, from the information, as he affirms, of four disciples of the saint. It is one of the worst that ever was written; for though the lives of the saints in general are as richly larded with lies, there is not, perhaps, a single one, with any foundation in truth from which so little information can be obtained. He was born in the province of Nursia, about the year 480, and was sent to Rome, to study the liberal sciences; but fearing lest he should lose his soul in the vain pursuit of knowledge, "*recessit scienter nesciens, et sapienter indoctus*," says St. Gregory, he left his family, as well as his studies, became a monk, and was chosen abbot; but being too strict for those who were under him, they attempted to poison him. After escaping the danger, he retired for a while into solitude, till, "increasing wonderfully in virtue and miracles," the noble Romans began to bring their children to him for instruction, and he acquired sufficient influence to establish twelve monasteries, with twelve monks in each. Here also he provoked either envy by his reputation, or hatred by his austerity; a priest in the neighbourhood is accused of endeavouring first to poison him, and afterwards to pervert his disciples, and Benedict thought it prudent once more to

its increase degeneracy grew proportionate.* Hence, we find that those who forsook the world with apparent contempt, were, in reality, its most attached and fondest votaries; being "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." We can form some idea of the extent of monkish degeneracy from the facts, that Pius VII. issued a bull, restricting monks from appearing in playhouses with the habits of their order! and that Charlemagne had attempted, by repeated and severe edicts, to put a stop to the growing evils which resulted from their licentiousness and enormities.†

It may be observed, that many learned and illustrious individuals have, from time to time, buried themselves in monastic seclusion. But, assuredly, this circumstance does not at all

withdraw. He took with him a few of his monks, and was accompanied by two angels, and three tame cows; a circumstance unaccountably omitted by his papal biographer, but related upon the equally valid testimony of Pietro Damiano, a cardinal and a saint. With this remarkable retinue he arrived at Mount Cassino, formerly, it is said, the residence of the Roman author Varro. There he destroyed a temple of Apollo, converted the pagans in the neighbourhood, founded a convent, wrote the rule of his order, and died in the year 543. *Quar. Rev.* 1819.

* Simon, Biblioth. Critique, tom. iii. cap. xxxii.

† Capitularia Caroli. published by Baluzius, tom. i.

argue in favour of similar retreats ; although every one must admit that monasteries were, during the dark ages, the magazines of literature, and the repositories of science. And I am induced to think, with the Abbé Premord, that "an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Homer, a Virgil, a Cicero, a Plato, a Demosthenes, and a Tacitus, would have remained entirely unknown to us, had it not been for the labours of monks and recluses ;" to whose indefatigable pens each lover of science and literature must confess that he owes a large debt of gratitude.* Yet, however highly we may be inclined to value the learning and persevering efforts of these men, we cannot but censure the system with which they were intimately connected ; as well as bear in mind, that

> " Talents, angel-bright,
> If wanting worth, are shining instruments
> In false ambition's hand—to finish faults
> Illustrious, and give infamy renown ! "

* *Vide* Mabillon, Acta. S. S. Ord. Benedicti, tom. ii.

CHAPTER III.

THE "CONSUETUDINAL" OF CŒNOBITES AND ANCHORITES.

No points of faith, no axioms of morality were more firmly established than the belief that every indulgence was sinful; that whatever gratified the senses, however apparently innocent, must be injurious to the soul; that the ties of natural affection weaned the heart from God; that the duties of social life must be abandoned by those who regarded their own salvation; and that in proportion as man inflicted privations and torments upon himself, he pleased his Creator!

MONKS were originally distinguished by the names of Cœnobites and Anchorites. The former so called from the circumstance of their living under regular rules and discipline; the latter from their extraordinary fanaticism in regulating their own individual observances, and holding no intercourse with each other. These early separatists deprecated and contemned the spirit of the monastery as much as they did that of the world; and lest they should be contaminated thereby, and induced to become as remiss and unmortified as others, fled from its baneful

atmosphere into the inaccessible cave and uninhabitable desert, frequented only by animals of prey, whom they even affected to imitate by going upon their hands and knees! Some aspirants took up their dwellings in the tombs, like the demoniacs, or abode in dens with wild beasts, or else made dens for themselves, and burrowed into the ground. Here, indeed, they had ample opportunity for gratifying their savage propensities; and, accordingly, they embraced such a mode of life with delight and satisfaction. But, as might be expected, they finally sunk under the stupendous weight of suffering, occasioned, in part, by heavy chains, collars, bracelets, gauntlets, and greaves, of massive and rigid iron; even some of those saints (forgive me for abusing the name) disdained the dress necessary for covering, and wandered about naked, exposed to the sun, the wind, and the sand showers which swept through the desert. A remarkable instance of this kind of fanaticism is exemplified in the life of St. Mary of Egypt—a person far-famed in monastic lore. Others, again, assimilating themselves more closely to the very brute, actually grazed in the fields of Mesopotamia; from which circumstance they were denominated Βοσκοι. And here it will not be ill-timed to mention a few

particulars respecting Simeon Stylites, the famous pillar saint.

This extraordinary fanatic, a sad and affecting instance of the physical miseries resulting from Rome's iniquitous doctrine of merit, was a Syrian by birth, and had been engaged in the occupation of a shepherd prior to his entering a monastic inclosure* Not considering, however, the profession of a monk sufficiently austere, he formed a scheme, as novel as it was impious, by which he imagined the justice of God would be appeased, and ample satisfaction rendered for his sins ! Accordingly he quitted his abode, and betook himself to a dreary spot in the desert, where, with a view of escaping the contagion of the world, and being lifted up above its cares, toils, and pursuits, he passed thirty-seven years of his miserable life upon five pillars, of the respective heights of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and forty cubits,† upon which lofty eminence he was bound by irons, so that he was constrained to remain in an immovable position ; and after performing rigorous mortifications,

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist.

† *Vide* Acts of Simeon the Stylite, in Steph. Euodii Assemanni Actis Martyrum Orient. et Occident. vol. ii. p. 227. (Romæ 1748.)

truly deserving of the name, which has helped, in no small degree, to fill the "*merit box*" of the Vatican, he finally expired.

So great was the reputation of this fanatic, and so highly was he venerated, that when the Emperor Theodosius had given a command to reinstate the Jews of Antioch in their synagogue, and Simeon rebuked him for his conduct, Theodosius confessed the iniquity of which he was guilty; and, not deeming this act sufficient to expiate his sin, he actually deposed the civil officer who advised him in the affair, ousted the poor persecuted descendants of Abraham, and finally besought, with earnestness and humiliation, the prayers and intercession of the aerial saint!

After the decease of Simeon, a church was built round the pillar, to perpetuate the remembrance of so devoted a man. And it is related on the authority of Evagrius, who had been a spectator of the miracle, that on each anniversary of the saint, a star was observed playing about the lofty monument. Women were not permitted to enter the church on these auspicious occasions, they might only stand at the door, and peep in, to witness the supernatural manifestation of delight with which heaven viewed a heap

of stones upon which the feet of so austere and sanctified a man once rested. His body was finally translated to Antioch, and from thence would have been removed, by the Emperor Leo, to Constantinople, had it not been for the entreaty of the people of the former city, who represented that an earthquake had thrown down their fortifications, and that they had brought thither the body of Simeon, that it should supply for them the want of a wall. The actions of this madman, or saint, according to the phraseology of the Church of Rome, are recorded for edification, though not for *imitation*, by Romish hagiographers. "This godly man," writes Evagrius, "while yet in the flesh, imitated the life of angels, withdrew himself from earthly things, forced nature, which ever inclineth downwards, aspiring to things heavenly, and placing himself between earth and heaven, he, together with the angels, praised the Lord, lifted up the prayers of men, and offered them to God, and brought down the mercy of God to make men partakers thereof."* Such are the sort of men held forth

* There is mention made of a second Simeon the Stylite, who lived about the sixth century, and who, it is said, exceeded, in mortification of life, the originator of the aeriel sect. He lived upon his pillar sixty-eight

to the Christian world as flowers of the spiritual garden ; whereas, in truth, they are rank weeds of the Egyptian soil.

The senseless superstition of the Syrians and Orientals the Latins had too much judgment and common sense to imitate ; nor was it countenanced by the bishops of the Latin church : for when Wulfilaicus erected a pillar in Treves, with the view of imitating the renowned Simeon, by living on its summit, the neighbouring bishops would not suffer him to put his desire into effect, and had the pillar crumbled to the ground.*

The lives of monastic heroes furnish us with numerous instances of the silliest extravagancies of superstition, and the most pitiable and loathsome excesses of ascetic rigour. We read, for example, of Mary of Egypt, who roamed uncovered through the barren wilderness ; of St. Pier, who always walked while he was taking his food, "because," to use his own words, "he did not consider eating as a business for which time was to be set apart, but as a thing to

years, and pretended to work miracles, and to prophesy. *Vide F. Spanheim's Eccl. Hist.* p. 1154. *Evagrius Hist.* lib. vi. c. xxiii.

* Mosh. Eccles. Hist. Gregor. Turonens. Hist. Francor. lib. viii. cap. xv.

be done when it did not interrupt his avocation"; of Beradat, who used no clothing, except a close sack of skins, which had no other opening than one for his nose, and another for his mouth; of the abbess Teresa, who, in order to torment her body, which was naturally weak and delicate, made use of hair-shirts, nettles, and scourges, and even used to roll herself among thorns; of Eufraxia, who belonged to a convent containing one hundred and thirty nuns, not one of whom ever washed her feet; the very mention of such an indulgence as a bath being an abomination to them.

The following affecting account of the austerities of Rose of Lima, who was canonized by Clement X. A.D. 1673, affords a sad specimen of Romish fanaticism. It is extracted from the bull of her canonization:

"She changed the stones and crosses (with which, when going to prayer in her childhood, and as yet ignorant of the use of whips, she was loaded by her maid Marianne, who was almost the only person conscious of her mortifications,) into iron chains, which she prepared as scourges, with which, after the example of St. Dominic, every night she offered herself a bloody victim to God to avert his just anger, even to

the copious effusion of streams of blood, either for the sorrows of the holy church, or for the necessities of the endangered kingdom of the city of Lima, or for compensating the wrongs of sinners, or for making an expiation for the souls of the dead, or for obtaining divine aid for those who were in their last agonies; the servant being sometimes horror-struck at the dreadful blows of the chains. And when the use of these were forbidden to her, she privately encircled her waist with one of them, bound thrice round her, so that it never was apparent that she wore it, except when she was under the tortures of the sciatica, which chain was afterwards loosened only by a miracle; and its links, after the virgin's death, were found to emit a wondrous and indescribable sweet odour. Lest any part of her innocent body should be free from suffering, she tortured her arms and limbs with penal chains, and stuffed her breasts and sides with handfuls of nettles and small briars. She afterwards increased the sharpness of the hair-cloth, which reached from her neck beneath her knees, by needles mixed up with it, which she used for many years, until she was ordered to put it off on account of the frequent vomiting of blood. When she laid aside this punishment, she substi-

tuted another garment less injurious to her health, but not less troublesome ; for beneath it every movement was painful to her. Her feet only were free from these sufferings, which either by hitting them with stones, or by the burning of an oven, she did not suffer to be free from torture. * * * * *

" She fixed upon her head a tin crown, with sharp little nails in it, and for some years never put it on without receiving wounds. When she grew older, this was replaced by one which was armed by ninety-nine points. * * * *

"She desired the hardness of her bed to be such that it should rather drive away than invite sleep, so that when about to sleep, the same should be both a bed to her and an instrument of torture. Her pillow was either an unpolished trunk, or stones concealed for this purpose, which bed she afterwards so filled with sharp pieces of tiles and triangular pieces of broken jugs, that the sharp points of each should be turned to her body ; nor did she try to sleep until she had embittered her mouth with a draught of gall.*

" Near the time of her death, Rosa throughout

* *Vide* Brev. Rom. Die xxx. Aug.

Lent alternately sang the canticles and praises of God, every day for a whole hour, with a very melodious bird, in so orderly a manner, that when the bird sang, the virgin was silent, and when the virgin sang, the bird, who was most attentive, ceased to sing. She invited, moreover, the inanimate plants, after an unheard-of fashion, to praise and to pray to God, pronouncing the verse, '*Benedicite universa germinantia in terra Domino.*' 'Bless the Lord, all ye things which bud on the earth.' And she so visibly persuaded them, that the tops of the trees touched the earth, as if adoring their Creator with a solemn veneration!"*

The following specimen of worse than Hindoo fanaticism, establishes the fact, that the Romish standard of sanctity in the nineteenth century is just the same as it was during the dark ages, when the greatest knaves and madmen were canonized as saints, and obtained a place in the mass-book. It is the sworn testimony of Father

* Codex Constitutionum, quas summi pontifices ediderunt in solemni canonizatione Sanctorum a Johanne XV. ad Benedictum XIII., sive ab an Dom. 993, usque ad A.D. 1729. Accurante Justo Fontanino, Archiepiscopo Ancyrano. Romæ, 1729. Ex. typographia Reverendæ Cameræ Apostolicæ.

Dominic Corsano, missionary of the Congregation of the most holy Redeemer, and confessor to the venerable servant of God, Alphonso Maria de Liguria, bishop of St. Agatha, declared at his canonization, A.D. 1830.

"I know for a certainty that this servant of God constantly scourged himself unbloodily and bloodily, and besides the unbloody scourgings enjoined by his rule, he was wont to punish himself every day; in the morning before the usual hour of rising, and in the evening after the signal for repose. On Saturdays he scourged himself till the blood flowed, and these scourgings were so violent, and caused so much blood to gush from his limbs, that not only was his linen always covered with it, but you might even see the walls of his small room stained, and his books sprinkled with it. * * * * Also from what I have seen with my own eyes, and have heard declared by certain fathers who are worthy of credit, I know that this servant of God macerated his body with hair-cloth with sharp points in it, and with chains, as well on the arms as on the legs, which he carried with him till dinner-time, and these for the most part were so armed with sharp points, that they filled with horror all who ever saw them. I have heard say, also,

that he had a dress filled with a coat of mail with iron points; that he had bandages of camel's hair; and other instruments of penance were casually seen by me, and by others of my companions, notwithstanding his zealous and circumspect secrecy.

"Of a similar kind was his extreme mortification in sleeping upon two planks covered with a sack, with a little straw in it, so that it appeared a hard stone. I frequently also heard say, that he slept during his few hours with a large stone hung on, and tied to his feet. * * * *

"I well remember that he never shaved himself when he was with us with a razor, but only by little and little he did it with pincers, and he caused his assistant friar to make his clerical crown with the same pincers!"*

The Roman Breviary is the repertory of legends as monstrous and absurd as those brought before the reader's notice. Therein we read, that St. Raymond of Pennafort made a voyage by

* Sacra rituum congregatione, emo. et Rmo. Domin. Cardinali Carracciolo relatore, beatificationis et canonizationis, ven. Servi Dei Alphonsi Maria de Lingorio, fundatoris congregationis semi. Redemptoris, ac olim Episcopi S. Agatha. Romæ, 1836. Apud Lazarinum, Rev. Cam. Apos. typographum.

sea of one hundred and sixty miles, from one of the Balearic Isles to Barcelona, neither in a ship, nor in a boat, but upon his own cloak ;* that St. Philip, of Nerium, was so wounded with the love of God, he continually languished ; and his heart boiled over with such ardour, that when it could not be contained within its own boundaries, the Lord wonderfully enlarged his breast, by breaking and elevating two of his ribs ;† that St. Dionysius walked, with his head in his hands, from Paris to the site of the present abbey of St. Dennis ;‡ that St. Nicholas, a holy infant, used regularly abstain from suck on Wednesdays and Fridays ;§ that St. Benedict, founder of an order of monks, used to work miracles habitually, raise the dead to life, and sing psalms before he was born ;‖ and that St. Patrick was wont to repeat daily the whole psalter, together with the canticles, and two hundred hymns and prayers ; three hundred times on each day to worship God upon his

* Breviarum Romanum, Die xxiii. Januarii.

† *Ibid.* Die xxvi. Maii.

‡ *Ibid.* Die ix. Octobris.

§ *Ibid.* Die vi. Decembris.

‖ *Ibid.* Die xxi. Martii. This strange incident is thus gravely narrated by the Cistercian poet, F. Nicholas

knees, and in each canonical hour of the day to sign himself one hundred times with the sign of the cross. Dividing the night into three portions, he spent the first in running through one hundred psalms, and in two hundred genuflexions; the second, in running through the other fifty psalms, immersed in cold water; and with his heart, eyes, and hands, raised to heaven, he yielded the third part to a short sleep upon a hard stone.*

Miss Nano Nagle, a striking illustration, in modern times, of the dreadful and degrading system of monachism—an engine of destruction wielded with powerful effect in advancing the cause of apostate Rome—was well known as the

Bravo, in his *Benedictina*, on the authority of Bonifacius Simoneta, an abbot of his order :—

——"Encarcelado en el lugar materno,
Alegres muestras el infante dava,
Articulando con un son superno
La voz que claro afuera resonava;
Ya en esto el nino delicada y tierno
El gozo celestial pronosticava,
Pues, aunque en carcel tenebrosa y negra
Con celestiales canticos se alegra.
Que pudo ser la vida de este infante,
Sino contento, jubilo, alborozo,
Pues sin mira del sol la luz radiante,
Antes que sepa el llanto, muestra el gozo!
Ya da indicios alegres de triumphante
Del infernal y Tartaro destrozo,
Semejante al Baptista en gloria tanta,
Pues donde danga Juan, Benito canta."

* S. Patritius *Breviarum Romanum.* Die xvii. Martii. Antverpæ, 1823.

founder of the Presentation order of nuns in Ireland. To such an extent was her mind influenced by Popish fanaticism, that she was almost continually in a kneeling posture, to enhance the merit of her devotions. Her knees became, in consequence, ulcerated; but she did not cease to assume this attitude, nor would she apply a remedy, although it is more than probable that so protracted an act of austerity and self-denial, tended to hasten her dissolution.

> "O judgment, thou hast fled to brutish beasts,
> And men have lost their reason!"

The ecclesiastical historian, describing Rome's fanatical saints, and their biographers, observes:

"No models of rational piety are to be found among those pretended worthies, whom they propose to Christians as objects of imitation. They amuse their readers with gigantic fables and trifling romances. The example they exhibit are those of certain delirious *fanatics*, whom they call *saints;* men of a corrupt and perverted judgment, who offered violence to reason and nature by the horrors of an extravagant austerity in their own conduct, and by the severity of those singular and inhuman rules which they prescribed to others. For, by what means were

these men *sainted?* By starving themselves with a frantic obstinacy, and bearing the useless hardships of hunger, thirst, and inclement seasons, with stedfastness and perseverance; by running about the country like madmen, in tattered garments, and sometimes half-naked, or shutting themselves up in a narrow space, where they continued motionless; by standing for a long time in certain postures, with their eyes closed, in the enthusiastic expectation of divine light. All this was saint-like and glorious; and the more that any ambitious fanatic departed from the dictates of reason and common sense, and counterfeited the wild gestures and the incoherent conduct of an idiot, or a lunatic, the surer was his prospect of obtaining an eminent rank among the heroes and demi-gods of a corrupt and degenerate church."*

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO EMBRACED THE MONASTIC PROFESSION.

Monastic institutions were in the first ages merely superstitious; but they ended in being eminently corrupt and wicked.

With reference to the character of those self-righteous Pharisees, who sought, both in the desert and the cell, to attain a purity and perfection equal to, if not surpassing, that of the celestial intelligences, by the regular performance of a certain routine of duty, and the scrupulous observance of rules and constitutions, as unscriptural in their nature as they were degrading to social beings, I shall, in the first instance take an extract from the writings of Rutilius, a celebrated traveller, who, upon visiting the island of Capraria, originally inhabited by wild goats, and taking its name from that circumstance, expressed his surprise, on beholding its new inhabitants, in the following terms:

"The whole island is filled, or rather defiled, by men who fly from the light. They call themselves monks, or solitaries, because they desire to live alone, without any witnesses of their actions. They fear the gifts of fortune from the apprehension of losing them; and lest they should be miserable, they embrace a life of voluntary wretchedness. How absurd is their choice, how perverse their understanding, to dread the evils without being able to support the blessings of the human condition. Either this melancholy madness is the effect of disease, or else the consciousness of guilt urges these unhappy men to exercise on their own bodies the tortures which are inflicted on fugitive slaves by the hands of justice." *

Another writer,† alluding to that division of the Franciscan order, denominated the "Spirituals," observes:

"So mad were those monks, that they conceived there was more honour in living by beggary than in any other profession. They roved about barefooted, and clad in coarse raiment, whining in every district, and rejoicing

* Claud. Rutul. Numation. Itinerar. i. 439.

† The author of the Life of the Regent Murray, patron of the Reformation in Scotland.

in their poverty; and at this period the miraculous sight was seen of a great schism in the church, occasioned solely by the fanaticism of those wealthy votaries of Saint Francis, the prince of beggars. * * * *

"But the truth is, if we reckon not the bodily mortifications to which those devotees might have submitted, there was literally nothing in all this profession of beggary which deserved the name; for though they undoubtedly subsisted by alms, it was not defined of what these alms should consist; and hence, although beggary was their glory, and the order of mendicancy their highest boast, they nevertheless, in superstitious times, fared not much worse than those who saw no cause for glorying in such a distinction. And the influence which they possessed by thus associating themselves with men of all ranks, and by this accommodation of themselves to every condition, enabled them to preserve the protection of the great, to gain ready access to every habitation, to interfere in every domestic circle, and to obtain devotees to their confessionals. They were, in short, a set of peripatetic ecclesiastics; and latterly, like all the other orders, they degenerated into roving priests."*

* Life of George Buchanan.

Dalzell, after employing the epithet "truly licensed vagabonds," proceeds to say of the monks: "Their only just characteristics were ignorance and assurance, levying a general contribution for their maintenance. Their business was to keep the people as ignorant as themselves, * and to inculcate a profound veneration for saints, relics, and the ministers of the church. Their manners were rude, brutal, and rapacious. They were vagrant monks." †

Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, speaking of monkish orders, says: "The multitude had such an high opinion of those sturdy beggars, and of their credit with the Supreme Being, that great numbers of both sexes, some in health, others in a state of infirmity, others at the point of death, earnestly desired to be admitted into the mendicant orders, which they looked upon as a safe and infallible method of rendering heaven propitious. Many made it an essential part of their last wills, that their carcasses, after

* It is a matter of undoubted testimony that so ignorant were many of the ecclesiastics of the sixteenth century, that they believed the New Testament to be written by Martin Luther, and consequently regarded it as a wicked book.

† Cursory Remarks, vol. i. p. 16.

death, should be wrapped in old ragged Dominican or Franciscan habits, and interred among the mendicants. For such was the barbarous superstition and wretched ignorance of this age, that people universally believed they should readily obtain mercy from Christ at the day of judgment, if they appeared before his tribunal associated with the mendicant friars." *

Nicholas de Clemangis, the pupil of the celebrated Gerson, rector of the University of Paris, and Secretary to Benedict XII., a man of no ordinary powers of mind, and a profound and accomplished scholar, who, from the circumstance of his being connected with the Papal court, must have had peculiar facilities afforded him of acquiring information upon ecclesiastical matters, thus writes, in his description of the monastic orders :

"I should have much to say of the monks and monastics, were I not long ere this weary of the enumeration of so many and such great abominations. Yet, not to suffer them to pass wholly untouched, it is necessary to say something. But what good can be said of those who, in proportion as they are bound by their vows to be per-

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.

fect above all other sons of the church, abstracted from the care of worldly things, which they have renounced, and raised up to the contemplation of heavenly things alone; in proportion as they are obliged to be more temperate, less disposed to wander, and to go more seldom from the walls of their cloister into public, in the same proportion exhibit themselves, on the contrary, as more than others, strangers to all these obligations; more grasping, more avaricious, more immersed in secular affairs, more slippery, more undisciplined, dissolute, and restless, more prone to run about into public, and even, if the reins are loosened, indecent places; so as that nothing is so odious to them as the cell and the cloister, reading and prayer, their rule and their profession. Wherefore they are monks indeed in their outward habit, but in life, in practice, inwardly in the defilement of their consciences, they are very far removed from that perfection which their habit pretends. Verily they grievously deceive themselves. For the more they abandon their profession, and seek eagerly after earthly riches, so much the less do they really hold, and so much the more do their endowments and revenues run away to nothing.

"The nuns only now remain. * * * But

modesty forbids me to say much of these, though I have much to say, lest we should draw out to too great a length a discourse which should apply not to a choir of virgins dedicated to God, but rather to * * * * * * and the impure practices of unchastity. For what, I pray you, are the nunneries now but sanctuaries—not of God, but of Venus?" *

The same writer further observes: "I would not that any should suppose that I involve all our ecclesiastics, without any exception, in such charges. I know that he did not, and could not lie, who said, 'Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Nor am I ignorant that there are in every station some, and perhaps many, good, just, and innocent men, who stand aloof from those crimes which have been mentioned. But so great is the overflow of the wicked in all professions, that scarce one in a thousand can be found who honestly performs what his profession requires. Nay, if there chances to be some simple, chaste, and frugal man, in a college or convent, who does not pursue the broad and slippery road, he is made a

* Compare Ivo of Charles, Ep. 70, and the note of Juretus upon that place.

jest of by the rest, and is presently called an oddity, or singular person, a madman, or a hypocrite. Whence also many who might have turned out well, if they had lived with modest and good men, drawn away in this manner by the company of evil comrades, are led into evil, through fear of incurring such nicknames in their fraternities." *

I may, perhaps, indulge the hope that enlightened Roman Catholics will receive with respect a testimony emanating from the pen of so talented and distinguished a member of their communion.

The moderate and candid Cassander, alluding to the low state of morals amongst the religious orders of his time, remarks:

"It is sufficiently manifest of itself how much monkery has degenerated from its first origin, and with what abuses it has become contaminated. The empty observance of ceremonies has so impaired and obscured religion amongst most monks, that you will hardly find anywhere a more licentious and profane mode of life than that which is practised in some monasteries.

* Lib. De Corrupto Statu Ecclesiæ, cc. 21, 25, (edit. Lyd.)

So that it is no wonder if, as the monastic life generally now is, it is exposed to the hatred and reprehension of many." *

As a further testimony of the inconsistency of character in persons professing to be scrupulously observant of the rules of monastic life, I shall adduce the evidence of one who, for several years, both in the capacity of a novice, and a professed nun, was in connexion with the *Hotel Dieu Nunnery*, at Montreal:

"I have often reflected," observes the writer, "how grievously I had been deceived in my opinion of a nun's condition! All the holiness of their lives, I now saw, was merely pretended. The appearance of sanctity and heavenly-mindedness which they had shown amongst us novices, I found was only a disguise to conceal such practices as would not be tolerated in any decent society in the world; and as for peace and joy like that of heaven, which I had expected to find among them, I learned too well that they did not exist *here*." †

I shall now allude to the declaration drawn up and signed by six nuns of St. Catherine of

* Inter opp. Grotii. Theol. tom. iii. p. 608, l. 40.

† Sequel to the Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk. Dublin, 1836.

Pistoria, and presented to the Grand Duke Leopold, A. D. 1775, which makes mention of the profligacy and gross impiety of the monks of St. Dominic. In it they say :

"Instead of allowing us to remain in our simplicity, and protecting our innocence, they teach us, both by word and action, all kinds of indecencies. They utter the worst expressions, saying, that we should look upon it as a great happiness, that we have the power of satisfying our appetites, without being exposed to the annoyance of children. They allow every kind of indecency to go on in the parlour." *

We have, further, a very appalling picture of the profligacy of the inmates of monastic establishments on the continent, drawn by the masterly hand of the famous Rev. Joseph Blanco White, once a priest of the Church of Rome, and chaplain to the king of Spain. After describing, at great length, the immoral practices of the Spanish ecclesiastics, and other priests of his acquaintance, some of whom, in consequence of their depraved habits, were prematurely cut off the stage of existence in a state of frantic insanity, he proceeds to remark :

* Roscoe's Life of Scipio de Ricci, vol. i.

"The picture of female convents requires a more delicate pencil. Yet I cannot find tints sufficiently dark and gloomy to portray the miseries which I have witnessed in their inmates. Crime, indeed, makes its way into those recesses, in spite of the spiked walls and prison gates which protect the inhabitants. *This I know with all the certainty which the self-accusation of the guilty can give!* It is, besides, a notorious fact, that the nunneries in Estremadura and Portugal, are frequently infected with vice of the grossest kind."*

The Church of England, in her Homilies, thus describes the impure and anti-christian system of monasticism:

"But to pass over the innumerable superstitiousness that hath been in strange apparel, in silence, in dormitory, in cloister, in chapter, in choice of meats and drinks, and in such like things, let us consider what enormities and abuses have been in the *three chief principal points*, which they called the three essentials, or three chief foundations of religion, that is to say, OBEDIENCE, CHASTITY, AND WILFUL POVERTY.

* Rev. Blanco White's Practical and Internal Evidence against Catholicism. London, 1825.

First, under pretence or colour of obedience to their father in religion, which obedience they made themselves, they were made free by their rules and canons from the obedience of their natural father and mother, and from the obedience of emperor and king, and all temporary power, whom of very duty, by God's laws, they were bound to obey. And so the profession of their obedience not due, was a forsaking of their due obedience. And how their profession of chastity was kept, it is more honesty to pass over in silence, and let the world judge of what is well known, than with unchaste words, by expressing of their unchaste life, to offend chaste and godly ears. And as for their wilful poverty, it was such that, when in possessions, jewels, plate, and riches, they were equal or above merchants, gentlemen, barons, earls, and dukes; yet by this subtile, sophistical term, *proprium in communi*, that is to say, proper in common, they mocked the world; persuading that, notwithstanding all their possessions and riches, yet they kept their vow, and were in wilful poverty. But for all their riches, they might neither help father nor mother, nor other that were indeed very needy and poor, without the license of their father-abbot, prior, or

warden ; and yet they might take of every man, but they might not give aught to any man ; no, not to them whom the laws of God bound them to help. * * * * * And the longer prayers they used by day and by night, under pretence and colour of holiness, to get the favour of widows, and other simple folks, that they might sing trentalles and service for their husbands and friends, and admit or receive them into their prayers, the more truly is verified of them the saying of Christ: 'Woe unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses under colour of long prayers, therefore your damnation shall be the greater.'" *

The founder of the famous Benedictines, in the opening of the rule of his order,† gives the

* Homily of Good Works, part iii.

† This rule has been compared to Aaron's rod, because it swallowed up all the others. At the second Council of Douzy, in 876, it was declared to be an inspired work, of equal authority with the canonical scriptures, and the writings of the Catholic doctors. Leo, archbishop of Ravenna, calls it a divine rule, dictated by the Holy Ghost, and leading infallibly to heaven. The Grand Duke, Cosmo de Medici, studied it, that he might there learn how to govern his estates ; and Calmet affirms, that in this work St. Benedict has

following account of the various degrees of monks, and their characters. He says:

"There are four kinds of monks. The first is of Cœnobites, that is monasterial or conventual, living under a rule or abbot. The second kind is of Anachorits, that is hermits, who not by a novitial fervour of devotion, but by a long probation in a monastic kind of life, have learnt, with the assistance of others, to fight against the devil; and being well armed, are able now, without the support of any other, by God's help, to fight hand to hand against the vices of the flesh and evil cogitations, and so proceed from the fraternal army to the single combat of the wilderness. The third and foulest kind of monks are the Saraibaites, who not having been tried

presented an ideal of the most excellent monarchy and the most perfect government. More than two hundred works have been written upon it, of which the best, and perhaps the last, is a Commentary, in two quarto volumes, by Calmet himself. The original rule, an autograph of Benedict, was burnt in the year 897, in the monastery of Theano, when that edifice was consumed by fire. Some far more curious relics were destroyed at the same time—the sacks in which food used to be sent to the saint from heaven. "*Sacci, in quibus jussu Dei, cælitus eidem Patri Benedicto escæ delatæ sunt!*" Such are the words of the *Chronicon Cassinense. Brit. Monach. Quar. Rev. July*, 1819.

under any rule by the experience of a skilful master, as gold is tried in the furnace, but being soft as lead, and still adhering by their actions to the world, are known by their tonsures to be liars unto God; who two or three together, or perhaps singly, without a shepherd, are shut up, not in the Lord's sheepfold, but in their own; and the pleasure of their desires is to them a law; and whatsoever they like or choose, this they will have to be holy, and what they mislike, that not to be lawful. The fourth are they who are called Gyrovagi, who all their life wander through divers provinces, and guest-wise, stay two or three days in one monastery, and then in another, and are always strolling and never settled, and giving themselves altogether to their own pleasures and to the enticements of gluttony, are in all things worse than the Saraibites, of the most miserable conversation, *of all which it is better to be silent than to speak!*" * So far from the pen of Saint Benedict.

Saint Bernard, the abbot, thus describes the worldly-mindedness and immorality of the monks:

* Trans. of the Rule of St. Benedict, by C. G., priest and monk of the Order. Douay, 1638.

"What shall I say concerning their very dress, in which not warmth but colour is sought after, and neatness of apparel, rather than virtue, is considered? *I am ashamed to declare it!* But even women are surpassed in their love of dress, since richness of apparel, and not what is necessary, is studied by the monks; nor is even the form of religion retained! The soldiers of Christ desire rather to be gaily dressed than to be armed."*

St. Bridget, in her "Revelations," which were recognized by the Councils of Constance and Bâsle, and by Urban VI., Martin V., and Paul V., after making such remarks on the deportment of the monks, as that I am compelled by feelings of delicacy to conceal them under the veil of the original,† proceeds to say:

* S. Bern. Ab. in Vig. Nat. Dom. Serm. i. *De Monach.*

† Orta est abusio gravis, in hoc, quod laicis bona ecclesiæ donantur, qui uxores non ducunt propter nomen canonicale, sed impudenter habent concubinas in domibus suis perdies, et in lectis per noctes, dicentes audacter, nos non licet esse in connubio, quia canonici sumus. Presbyteri etiam diaconi et subdiaconi, olim in infamiam immundæ vitæ maximè abhorrebant. Nunc autem quidam illorum manifestè lætantur in eo, quod meretrices eorum intumescente ventre veniunt inter alias ambulare. Nec etiam pudet eos si ab amicis eorum dicitur eis, ecce, domine, citò natus erit vobis filius vel filia! *Revelationem S. Birgittæ.* lib. iv. c. 33. (*Edit. Coloniæ*, 1829.)

"It is a sad thing to behold their rules changed into detestable abuses," And again, alluding to the nuns, she adds:

"The doors through which the sisters are pleased to afford an entrance to clergymen and laymen, are open even at night; and therefore such places resemble rather houses of bad fame than holy cloisters!"*

Though the writers, whose testimony I have adduced, may be considered of sufficient authority in affording to the world a real and unexaggerated character of the monastic orders; yet, these were not the only individuals who, regardless of the painful consequences which such a course might possibly involve, openly and fearlessly exposed the abominations of the foul and degrading system of monkery, and cried aloud against the enormities perpetrated by those *soi-disant* saints, whose sanctity was but another name for licentiousness. We find that Robert Gosthead, bishop of Lincoln, inveighed bitterly against the corruption, lewdness, and wickedness of the so-called religious orders of his age.†

* Portæ indifferenter clericis et laicis quibus placet sororibus introitum dare, etiam in ipsis noctibus sunt apertæ. Et ideò talia loca similiora lupanaribus, quàm sanctis claustris. *Rev. S. Bir.* lib. iv. c. 33.

† Dupin xiii. Siecle. c. vii.

In like manner did Matthew Paris, monk of St. Albans, paint, in the most lively colours, the antichristian character of the ecclesiastical orders of the church.* Arnold of Brescia, gave a similar testimony; for which he was burned at Rome, A.D. 1155, and his ashes thrown into the Tyber.† William, of St. Amour, doctor of the Sorbonne, also raised his voice against them, and in a treatise "Of the Perils of the last Times," applied 2 Tim. iii. 1., etc., to the mendicant orders then in existence; which work Alexander IV. condemned, as containing perverse sentiments.‡ In like manner did Peter of Bruges, and Henry his disciple, rail against the hypocrisy of the monks, and asserted, among other things, that "monks ought to marry;" for which the one was burned, and the other imprisoned for life.§ To these might be added a host of writers, one of the most distinguished of whom was the celebrated John Wickliffe, rector of Lutterworth, in England, whose body, after his decease, to satisfy the intolerant spirit

* Mat. Par., A.D. 1253, p. 874.

† Spanh. Hist. Chris., c. vii. sect. iv. Dupin xii. Siecle. c. vi.

‡ Dupin, viii. Siecle. c. vii., Spanh. c. ix. s. i.

§ Spanh, c. vii. sec. ii. Dupin, xii. Siecle. c. vi.

of the Romish Church, was dug up and burned by command of pope Martin V., in conjunction with the decree of the Council of Constance; which iniquitous edict was executed by Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln.* This is not a solitary instance of Rome wreaking her impotent vengeance, in so barbarous a manner, upon those who dared to defy her usurped and illegitimate authority. Her statement that she is "unchanged and unchangeable" is true, as far as a malignant and gospel-hating spirit is concerned. For she has exhibited the same undying hatred to righteousness and truth, on the accession of Queen Mary to the throne of England, when, by her authority, Cardinal Pole, and other eminent divines of her communion, went to Cambridge, interdicted the churches where the bodies of Bucer and Phagius were laid, and, after a mock trial and blasphemous sentence, the dead carcasses of these eminent servants of God were dug up, conveyed in their coffins to the market place, set upright, bound with iron chains, and finally consumed!

From so disgusting a portrait of the degeneracy and ungodly deportment of those who made a solemn profession, and wore the garb of sanctity,

* Spanh. c. vi. Dupin.

it will naturally occur to every unprejudiced mind, that there must be some principle fundamentally and essentially wrong in a church, which could give birth to such a system of hypocrisy and immorality. History furnishes us with numerous records of crimes, the most horrifying and revolting, committed not only within the silent recesses of a monastic inclosure, but perpetrated visibly, and without any desire of concealment, by all degrees of ecclesiastics, from the humblest monk to the loftiest dignitary; not excepting even the sovereign pontiffs, who filled the chair of Peter :* and if history be not an "old almanac," we must certainly respect and credit its authority. It

* Ratherius, bishop of Verona, says, that the clergy were in general so immodest, that scarcely a priest was found fit to be ordained bishop, and scarcely a bishop fit to confer ordination. He recounts several shocking stories respecting the behaviour of ecclesiastics, and he charges them principally with holding infamous conversation with profligate females. Pope Sergius and pope John XI., the latter son of the former by his concubine Marosia, and other pontiffs of the same description, by their own proffligacy set the example to the inferior clergy, of throwing off that mask, which might otherwise conceal their debaucheries from the eyes of the world. *Rev. Mr. O. Croly's Inquiry*, etc. Dublin, 1835.

Baronii Annales (Antverpio 1603). Genebrardi Chron. A.C. 904. (Paris, 1585).

exhibits a melancholy picture of the unrighteous living of those, whose duty it was to inculcate the precepts of the Gospel of Christ; the darkness, superstition, ignorance, moral depravity, and gross idolatry, of the almost universal church; and the nearly total extinction of genuine piety and true religion, save what was cherished by the poor but persecuted Waldenses and Vaudois, who strove fearlessly to uphold "the faith once delivered to the saints."† And if the picture be faithfully drawn, must we not acknowledge—does not love for the truth—love for our blessed Lord, and his sacred, saving word, force upon us the conviction, that a Reformation, both in morals and religion, was most urgently and imperatively required?

So corrupted, indeed, by formal worship and superstitious observances, was the professing church, and so signal was the development of the "mystery of iniquity," prior to the bursting forth of the glorious sun of the Reformation, that I cannot contemplate the long night of Egyptian darkness and ignorance, the intellectual bondage and spiritual desolation, the moral

† Reiner. Cont. Hæret. c. iv. p. 54. Thuani. Hist. lib. vi. sect. 16, vol. i. p. 220.

depravity and unblushing wickedness, which then existed in all their hideous and primeval deformity, without feeling, as did the poet, who, when entering upon his survey of the regions of despair, exclaimed :

" Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi retrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarita :
E quanto a dir, qual' era, e cosi dura,
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte
Tanto e amara che poco e piu morte."

DANTE INFERNO.

" When life had laboured up her midmost stage,
And, weary with her mortal pilgrimage,
Stood in suspense upon the point of Prime,
Far in a pathless grove I chanced to stray,
Where scarce imagination dares display
The gloomy scenery of the savage clime.
On the deep horrors of the tangled dell,
With dumb dismay, the pow'rs of mem'ry dwell—
Scenes terrible as dark impending fate."

BOYD'S DANTE.

CHAPTER V.

CONCISE HISTORY OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER.

The religious orders which the Church of Rome has made it her care to multiply under her banner, esteeming them her Janissaries, jealous of each other's power, are constantly at war among themselves. RAFFAELE CIOCCI.

I HAVE now to direct the reader's attention to the celebrated order of friars, or monks, denominated Franciscans, of which St. Francis was the distinguished founder.

An attempt to compress within narrow limits all the strange incidents connected with the life of this extraordinary man, and the principal constitutions of his sodality, would not be complimentary to the several able writers, who have taken pains to elucidate his history ; nor would it be doing justice to the individual himself, whose singular life has furnished them with such ample and valuable materials. So wonderful, however, are many of the circumstances which have

occurred through his instrumentality and that of his mendicant associates, that it is quite necessary to take a brief review of them, as characteristic of the memorable personage, whose name, and system of discipline, occupy so prominent a place in the pages of history.

Francis, the son of a wealthy merchant, was born at Assisi, in Italy, A. D. 1181. After his recovery from a severe fit of illness, occasioned by an irregular and licentious habit of life, he renounced his immoral practices, and assumed a more than ordinary appearance of sanctity. Having disposed of his worldly possessions, he retired from social life, and lived with a few associates in a state of the most abject poverty. Hence originated an order which finally grew so numerous and powerful as to disturb states, and hurl even a pope from his dominions! This illustrious man died on the 4th of October, 1226; and in 1230 was canonized, and placed in the calendar of saints, by Gregory IX.*

* A writer remarks, "that all who are canonized by the pope cannot be said to be in heaven." The instance of Hermar is a curious one: "for twenty years together after his death, he was honoured for a saint, but afterwards his body was taken up and burnt." *Note to Lecture on Popery by the Rev. A. Turner.* Glasgow.

How an order of monks, such as the discalced or barefooted Franciscans, possessing few, if indeed any inducements to desert social life, and established on principles so extremely rigorous and austere, could have increased in so extensive and rapid a manner, is a subject which must assuredly produce a large degree of surprise in the minds of those who have studied its origin, and are familiar with its early history. Even the very disgrace consequent upon mendicancy, a primary and essential part of their code, one should suppose, would be an impediment quite sufficient to check the progress of such an institution. But, as a sensible writer justly remarks, "the ecclesiastics of that age had the happy art of making everything subservient to their own individual interest, as well as to that peculiar establishment with which they were connected, that the profession of beggary was, so far from being looked upon as humiliatory, regarded as an honourable, if not the most honourable of all engagements."* Moreover, to such a degree of celebrity did these monks arrive, that they ruled not merely the monastic orders of their day, but, although it may sound discordant in modern ears attuned

* Life of Buchanan.

to the doctrine of infallibility, even the very court of Rome itself.* The pontifical assemblies,

* Not only has the Roman pontiff's authority been considered of equal weight with that of a General Council, but it has sometimes been actually placed, not only above councils, but even the decrees of the apostles themselves! Andradius saith: "Liquet eos minime errasse, qui dicunt Romanum Pontificem posse nonnunquam in legibus dispensare a Paulo et primis quatuor conciliis. Minime vero majores nostri religione et pietate excellentes Apostolorum hæc et quam plurima alia decreta refigere in animum induxissent nisi intellexissent," etc. *Andrad. lib.* ii., *de Trid. Fid.*

"It is manifest that those have not erred who say, that the Roman pontiff can sometimes dispense with obeying the laws of the apostle Paul, and of the four first Councils; nay, our ancestors, men of great piety and religion, have BROKEN AND ANNULLED MANY DECREES OF THE APOSTLES!"

A distinguished Cardinal of the Romish Church writes; "Si Papa erraret in præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona et virtutes mala, nisi vellet contra conscientiam peccare." *Bellar. L.* iv. *de Pont. f. cap.* 5.

"Should the pope err in commanding vices, and forbidding virtues, the church should be bound to believe that the *vices were good*, and *the virtues bad*, unless she would sin against conscience!"

Again, pope Innocent III. says: "Secundum plenitudinem potestatis de jure, supra jus, possumus dispensare." *Decret. de concess. præbend. Tit.* iii., *cap. proposuit.*

"We may, according to the plenitude of our power, dispense with the law, and above the law!"

as well as the councils of the state, bowed alike implicitly to their dictates, and each acquiesced in their decision.

But the pinnacle of glory to which these monks attained, and the sceptre of authority which they swayed, were but preludes to a terrible downfal; a disaster highly aggravated by the eminence from which they fell, and the princely influence they had exercised. Nor did the patronage of John XXII., or their former popularity, screen them from universal disapprobation and censure. Owing to the imperious and insolent manner in which, like despotic rulers, they employed their power, councils had assembled in many kingdoms and provinces of Europe, with the express design of rendering every possible opposition to their proceedings, and of checking the progress of their assumed dominion. In like manner, the principal ecclesiastics of the Universities of Paris and Oxford, united their combined and vigorous energies to procure the total suppression of the Franciscan order. *

Nor did opposition to these clerical despots terminate here. They and their vices were ridiculed and exposed by various eminent writers; amongst the most powerful of whom was

* Wood's Antiq. Oxon. tom. i, p. 150.

the celebrated and learned Buchanan, who, according to the testimony of the French writer, Le Laboureur, was once connected with the order. The most distinguished of the works of Buchanan are the "*Somnium*," "*Alcoranus Franciscanorum*," and the "*Franciscanus*," or the "Franciscan;" the last of which, together with the Satire of Sir David Lindsay, entitled "The Three Estates," was made the subject of a drama. The former was acted before James V., and the latter in presence of the king, queen, and courtiers at Linlithgow, on the festival of the Epiphany, A.D. 1539.

Those individuals who had the moral resolution to make an *exposé* of the depravity and ungodliness of the Franciscan monks, experienced, for the most part, the dire effects of their deep-rooted malevolence. The unhappy friar Killore fell a holocaust at their demonian shrine; whilst others, among whom was Buchanan, were cast into the dungeons of the Inquisition.*

* The bearing of the court of Inquisition on the domestic and social affections appears in a very appaling light. A system of *espionage* was instituted, in which no regard was had to the most sacred and endearing ties which bind human beings together. All the charities of home and of neighbourhood were sacrificed at the shrine

Buchanan, accompanied by eleven others, attended the celebrated Govea to the University of Coimbra, in Portugal, in the year 1547, at this time patronised by John III., the existing monarch. Being suspected of favouring the

of this Moloch of iniquity; and more dismal than the dungeon which the light of heaven was not allowed to enter, and the rack on which the body was lacerated unto agony, and the devouring flames which terminated the life of many a sufferer, were the gloom, and the bondage, and the anguish of spirits, that had endured the violation of nature's holiest and sweetest ties—the tearing asunder of bonds which were stronger than death. There is not within the compass of human language terms that shall adequately describe a system, of which the shadow of death might be regarded as the least formidable of its ministers. In that Pandemonium of horrid darkness and cruelty, it seemed as if the infernal regions had been transferred to the dominions of Popery—as if a legion of satanic fiends had, in mockery of all the principles of justice and of mercy, combined for the destruction and misery of their victims. This court, in the course of eleven years, condemned to various forms of punishment —many of them to the flames—52,855 individuals; and not content with glutting its murderous policy in the land of the living, violated the rest of the grave, disinterred thousands and tens of thousands, and burnt them as an offering to the demon of revenge! "My God," exclaimed Constantine of la Fuente, "were there no Scythians or cannibals into whose hands to deliver me, rather than to let me fall into the power of these barbarians?" *Dr. Smyth on Popery.*

principles of the Reformation, he was, with two members of the University, seized and brought before the tribunal of the Inquisition; and being privately accused of having eaten flesh-meat during Lent, of vilifying the monks, and of being altogether a dangerous and unsafe person, was cast into one of its infernal dungeons—upon whose portals may well be inscribed the epigraph of Dante:

> "Per me si va nella citta dolente:
> Per me si va nell' eterno dolore:
> Per me si va tra la perduta genta."

> "Through me you pass into the city of woe:
> Through me you pass into eternal pain:
> Through me among the people lost for aye."
> CANTO iii. 1.

There can be no doubt but that the Portuguese ecclesiastics had heard of the severe attacks made upon the monastic orders by Buchanan; and, therefore, they did not let the opportunity escape for gratifying their vindictive feelings. This persecuted individual, although confined for nearly two years in the Inquisition, and closely shut up for several months in a monastery, in order that he might be *edified* by the saintly deportment of its inmates, and thereby be induced to abandon his heretical

opinions, yet knew not why he was deprived of his liberty, or what acts of his drew down upon him the fierce displeasure of his savage persecutors. Happily, however, he escaped the rack and the flames; and on being finally liberated, with the consent of the king, he embarked from Lisbon for England—leaving with feelings of inexpressible delight, a country whose very atmosphere was impregnated with the atrocities of its inhabitants; and where men, outwardly professing to be dispensers of the oracles of God, and upholders of the Christian faith, were, in truth, nothing less than propagators of the "doctrines of demons," and supporters of the lying impositions of Satan.

"Monstrum horrendum informe horribile ingens."

But to resume. The most inveterate enemies that the Franciscans had to contend with were, strange to say, the monks of Saint Dominic! *

"When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war."

* There is so much impiety connected with the history of the Franciscans, so much cruelty with that of the Dominicans, and so much flagitious and blasphemous imposture with both, that the founders of these several orders can hardly be seen in their true characters. *Quar. Rev.* art. *Brit. Monach.*

These fiery bigots, who were the chief actors in the Inquisitional Courts, and the stern dispensers of ecclesiastical rigour, pursued the Franciscans with that peculiar ferocity for which they were proverbial, until, at length, their implacable resentment became somewhat abated by consigning to the flames several of those unfortunate beings who were the objects of their displeasure. So much for the unity of the Papal Church and her ecclesiastical orders! "Papal uniformity," says a well-known writer, "is like the hard and glittering surface of an ice-bound chaos, dazzling without, but imprisoning all within."* And truly there is an union in ignorance, as all things are confounded together in the dark!

At length a schism, fraught with direful consequences, took place in this distinguished confraternity. The primary causes which led to so singular a result, were differences of opinion respecting the particular habit or dress of the order, and the extent to which their worldly possessions should be carried.

Frequent attempts were made by successive pontiffs to mitigate the severity of the consti-

* Rev. J. Godkin's Guide from the Church of Rome to the Church of Christ.

tutions of St. Francis, which were extremely rigid with regard to the possessions of the monks. But these attempts proved unsuccessful. The order, however, in a short time, became divided into two great parties. The one opposed the jurisdiction of the pope; the other received all his decrees and submitted to his authority. The former were denominated Anti-papal Franciscans, and consisted of the Fratricelli, or Minorites, the Tertiaries, or Beghards, and the Spirituals. The latter were styled the Brethren of the Community. This class having the advantage of superior numbers, laboured very zealously to exterminate the Spirituals. Clement V. being then pope, was desirous to effect a reconciliation between parties so opposed; and for this purpose he issued the bull, "*Exivi de paradiso*," which enjoined the strictest poverty on the whole order, and prohibited the possession of any property, except what was indispensable for their immediate wants; although at the same time, it permitted those of the order who resided in districts or localities where the necessaries of life were not attainable, to erect store-houses, or granaries, to which they could resort in times of scarcity. This bull pleased the French

brethren extremely well; but as the Italian monks were determined to remain obstinate, they refused to be ruled by the pope's mandate; and, in order to set themselves at liberty from the power and authority of their spiritual rulers, they finally evacuated their country, and went to Sicily.*

After much labour and repeated endeavours on the part of Clement to subdue the turbulent spirit of the French Franciscans, he finally succeeded. But the tranquillity which ensued, unhappily, terminated with his life. For after the decease of this pontiff, the Franciscan war broke out afresh. Nor was there a period since the first introduction of the schism, when the interests of the two adverse bodies, the Spirituals and the Brethren of the Community, were so warmly upheld. It is truly horrifying to contemplate the dire calamities which followed. So revolting are they to the best feelings of human nature, that we would be disposed to question their reality, did not the indubitable testimony of history place them upon record as facts which cannot be disputed.

Although papal authority and influence were vigorously employed to quench the flame of

* Boulay. Hist. Acad. Paris. tom. iv. p. 152.

dissension amongst the two generic sections of this order, it but burned the brighter, and blazed forth with increased strength and fury, in proportion to the efforts made to suppress it. At length an opportunity was afforded for giving vent to a rancour long-cherished and deep-rooted, and for exhibiting it in all its fiendish asperity. After a well concocted conspiracy, one hundred and twenty of the Spirituals suddenly came down upon, and most violently attacked, the Brethren of the Community in their convents at Narbonne and Beziers,* expelled them from their habitations, and, after denunciations the most terrific, imbrued their hands in the blood of their victims, leaving scarcely a remnant to relate the horrible tale.

So awfully tragic an occurrence compelled John XXII., who was Clement's successor, to issue a brief, in order to preserve the public peace; as from the fact of the citizens of Narbonne favouring the Spirituals, the probable result would be riot, confusion, and disorder. At length this pope succeeded in abolishing some of the lesser distinctions of the order; and after advising the king of Sicily to expel from his dominions the Spirituals, who resorted thither

* A.D. 1314. Mosh. Eccles. Hist.

for self-defence, he commanded the French Spirituals to attend a council, to be held at Avignon, and required that they should lay aside their short, straight habits, with the small hoods.

The papal injunction was universally acquiesced in, with the exception of twenty-four brethren, and their leader, Francis Bernard Delitiosi, who fanatically asserted, that the Gospel of Christ was not more sacred, or more to be obeyed, than the rules of St. Francis; that the pontiffs who permitted the order to erect store-houses and granaries, had sinned most grievously; and that requiring a change of dress different from that prescribed by the founder, added fearfully to their weight of guilt! Hereupon, pope John, becoming exasperated to the highest degree, anathematized these disentients, and ordered that they should be punished as heretics. Accordingly Delitiosi was apprehended, but ultimately died in confinement; whilst four of his followers were condemned to be burned at Marseilles.* These circumstances occasioned a revival of malignity against the pope and his abettors, by the Spirituals,

* A.D. 1318. Argentre, Col. Judic. de novis errorib. tom. i. p. 294.

who denounced John XXII. as "Antichrist," and the "Man of Sin," and maintained that he should be deposed for having "shed the blood of the saints."

Such an aspect of affairs could not long continue without a change, as each party was striving for supremacy. For either the Spirituals must be the rulers, or the Roman pontiff's decrees must be obeyed. The pope, therefore, perceiving that his authority was disregarded by these obstinate and tenacious monks, and being highly offended that the term "Antichrist" was applied to him—however deserving of the appellation*—delivered them over to the tender mercies of their most obdurate enemies, the

* Pope Gregory the Great (about the year 594), in one of his letters to John Bishop of Constantinople, said: "*Quisquis se universalem Sacerdotem vocat in elatione sua Antichristum præcurrit.*" "Whoever in his pride calls himself universal priest, is Antichrist's harbinger," Yet in a few years after (A.D. 606), his own successor assumes this very title, under the name of Boniface III., by the aid of the Emperor Phocas. Cardinal Baronius thus mentions the fact: "Phocas iratus Ciraco Episcopo Constantinopolitano adjudicavit titulum *Œcumenici Pontifici* Romano soli." (Bar. ad A. D. 606.) "Phocas being incensed against Ciriacus, bishop of Constantinople, who had assumed the title, granted the title, *Sovereign Pontiff*, to the Roman Bishop." Roger Hoveden writes: "That Abbot

Dominicans, who were specially empowered and authorized to apprehend them wherever they may be found. These "indefatigable soldiers," we need scarcely inform the reader, executed the papal command with promptitude and rigour. Accordingly several hundred of the devoted Franciscans were condemned to the stake in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany.

The Spirituals became again aroused in consequence of the martyrdom of their brethren; and having secured the patronage of Lewis of Bavaria, who greatly assisted the promotion of their designs, they succeeded, by repeated intrigues, in persecuting the Dominicans, and depriving John XXII. of the popedom. After the death of this pontiff, succeeding popes endeavoured to reconcile these two hostile factions; but neither edicts, bulls, or inquisitorial punishments, could effect the desired union. At

Johachim, in conversing with Richard I. of England, and Philip II. of France, on Antichrist, said: '*Quod jam natus est in Civitate Romana et in Sæde Apostolica Sublimabitur.*' 'That already he was in Rome, and should be lifted up to the apostolical chair.'" (Hoved. Annal. Post. in Rich. I. p. 681.) And St. Bernard said, "That the popes were not the ministers of Christ, and that the *Apocalyptic beast* occupied the chair of St. Peter." *Usser. de Christ. Eccl. Sur. et Stat.* c. vii. secs. 5 & 6.)

length, after much entreaty, a division of the order, into two bodies, was unanimously agreed upon. The one was denominated the Conventual Brethren, and the other, the Brethren of the Observation.* Thus, as has been ably remarked by one who lately came out of Babylon, "Unity being the boasted palladium of the Romish Church, it is necessary that she should see how weak is her battle steed, her invulnerable Achilles."†

I cannot more fitly close the present subject, than by referring the reader to what a reformed Romish priest has said respecting these mendicant monks. He observes, that their "austerity, mortification, and holiness were merely exterior; for the coarse, dirty, disgusting habit and cowl of the filthy Franciscan, served to cover an indulged and well-pampered body. And these worthies were accustomed to riot, and 'drown dull care' in their jovial convents as well as the lord of the soil, or the pope himself. As to piety or edification, their cloisters exhibited quite the contrary. They were generally scenes

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.

† Narrative by Raffaele Ciocci, formerly a Benedictine and Cistercian monk, student, and Hon. Librarian of the Papal College of San Bernado, Alle Terme Diocleziane, in Rome.

of licentiousness, contention, mutual jealousy, bickering and disorder. And even at this day there is scarcely to be found a single man of spirit or talent in the community of these stupid, ignorant, worthless, over-bearing drones." *

* Papal Impositions and Monastic Intrigue portrayed. By the Rev. M. Brenan.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCIPAL MONASTIC ORDERS EXISTING IN IRELAND—THE VOWS AND INTERNAL DISCIPLINE OF THE MONKS.

The Court of Rome had a leading self-interested object in every one of its institutions, of which that of monastic orders was not the least powerful or conspicuous. Not a prince in Europe has such a regularly constituted body of *Gens d'armes* as has the pope in these several orders; all devoted to his cause, and obliged by their *vows* to maintain his arrogant power and authority.

REV. M. BRENAN, A REFORMED PRIEST.

ALTHOUGH there are various monastic societies in Ireland, each having its peculiar appellation, yet there are but three orders, exclusive of the several ecclesiastical bodies of regulars or friars, which have obtained any celebrity worthy of notice. These are denominated the Cistercians, or Trappists, the Christian Brothers, and the Presentation Monks.

The Cistercian order was originally founded towards the close of the eleventh century, by Robert, abbot of Moleme, in Burgundy, who to revive the decaying spirit and discipline

of his monastery, retired, with about twenty of the monks, to Citeaux, in the diocess of Chalons, which was, at that time, a wild and barren wilderness, where he and his associates observed the rules of St. Benedict with scrupulous exactness and rigour. This order progressed in so wonderful a manner, that in the following century it was propagated throughout several parts of Europe. And so great was the fame of these monks, that they not only received the most costly and munificent presents and endowments, but were actually assigned the privileges of a spiritual republic; and, in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters, acquired a governing power over every kingdom within the precincts of which they had established themselves. Their progress exceeded that of all other monastic institutions. And in less than a century after the foundation of the order, it boasted of nearly two thousand religious houses.*

Those members of the Cistercian order, who planted themselves in Ireland, were, some few years ago, driven from infidel France, having previously endured imprisonment, and suffered

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Mabillon's Annales Benedictines, vols. v. and vi. Pier le Nain's Essai de l'Histoire de l'Ordre des Citeaux. Paris: 1696.

many privations. Landing on the shores of hospitable Ireland—whose inhabitants are proverbial for a readiness to shelter the children of misfortune, and to succour the oppressed and destitute—they speedily gained the affections, and found an asylum in the homes, of the humble peasantry, who sympathised with these exiles, as being members of a common faith. Shortly after their arrival, the wandering monastics, headed by their abbot, the Right Rev. Dr. Ryan, fixed their habitation on a wild and mountainous part of a southern district, where they laboured under numerous disadvantages, and felt the bad effects of a moist and humid atmosphere, so different from the continental climate. Several of the monks were subsequently dispersed throughout England and the sister isle, with the view of collecting funds for the erection of a monastery, which would exceed in splendour any other edifice erected for cloistered purposes. Having experienced the good effects of the begging system, and realised a sufficient sum, a splendid monument of monasticism was erected at Mount Melleray, in the county of Waterford, where the brotherhood now reside.* It is well

* An election of an abbot took place on Thursday, January 29th, 1846. The bishop presided as legate of

known that Sir Richard Keane, the lord of the soil, granted for the site of the edifice a large tract of mountain land, comprising above five hundred acres, at a nominal rent.

The Cistercian order is considered as inferior to none but the Carthusian; so called from *Chartraux*, near Grenoble, in Dauphine, which

the Holy See; Very Rev. Dr. Burke, notary, and the Very Rev. Drs. O'Brien, Fogarty, and Hally, witnesses, as required by the constitutions of the order. The most strict and severe caution was observed on the part of those voting and those that received the votes.

At the close of the scrutiny, the announcement was made to the anxiously awaiting brothers, that Father Mary Joseph Ryan, of Clonmel, was unanimously elected their future abbot. With joy on their countenances, and thanksgiving on their tongues, the holy brotherhood could scarce contain themselves, because of the happiness they felt at the appointment of such a great and good man. The abbot elect was then introduced into his place in the choir, while the monastery bells were pealing forth the joy of the happy inmates. On entering the church, the "Te Deum" was chanted by the responsive choir in thanksgiving to God, whose Holy Spirit was invoked, and directed the choice just made. Here he was confirmed in his new capacity by having the crozier put into his hand; a very interesting ceremony. From the choir he was conducted by the bishop through the church into the chapter-room, and installed in the abtatial throne, where he is in future to guide and govern this holy and truly perfect community. *The Tablet.*

was instituted in the year 1084, by Bruno, a native of Cologne, and canon of the Cathedral of Rheims, in France. It may be here remarked, that "this zealous ecclesiastic, who had neither power to reform, nor patience to bear, the dissolute manners of his archbishop, Manasse, retired from his church, with six of his companions, and having obtained the permission of Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, fixed his residence in a miserable desert. He adopted at first the rule of St. Benedict, to which he added a considerable number of severe and rigorous precepts. His successors, however, went still farther, and imposed upon the Carthusians new laws, much more intolerable than those of their founder; laws which inculcated the highest degrees of austerity that the most gloomy imagination could invent. And yet, notwithstanding all this, it is remarkable, that no monastic society degenerated so little from the severity of its primitive institution and discipline, as this of the Carthusians." *

The Trappists derive their name from La Trappe, situate on the borders of Perche and Normandy, in which locality Routrou, Count du

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Helyot's Hist. des Ordres, tom. vii. p. 3[illegible]

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Perche, in order to fulfil a vow made by him when in danger of being shipwrecked, founded an establishment of the order, in the year, 1140.* With reference to the discipline enjoined by the Cistercian constitutions, it will be sufficient to confine my remarks to a delineation of its most prominent features.

The monks of this order are divided into two classes; namely, Choir Religious, and Lay Brothers. The former are either priests, or candidates for the priesthood, though there are some amongst them, who, from affected humility, would not accept so exalted a position. The choir monks wear *white* habits or tunics, with an additional garment attached, that covers the head. At the various canonical hours they chant the service of the Romish Church, in the choir of the chapel attached to their monastery. They take the first place in the refectory and dormitory, and are allowed certain other privileges, needless to mention, which are denied to the subordinate members of the community.

The lay brothers, for the most part, are a class of vulgar and illiterate persons, being distinguished from the choir religious by a

* Memoirs of Count D'Auvergne.

brown habit and hood which descends so low as almost to conceal their faces from observation. These individuals do not assist in the Latin office, but as a substitute recite, or mutter over, a number of *paters* and *aves*, which they reckon on their many-stringed beads—the only mode of performing devotional exercises practised by the ignorant devotees of the papacy, for which cause Mantuan has very justly styled their religion—

"Religionem,
Quæ filo insertis numerat sua murmura baccis ;"

or "a religion that numbers their murmurs by berries filed upon a string." Might not this kind of prayer be truly likened to the Βαττολογια, or vain repetitions of the Gentiles,* which our blessed Lord condemned, and against which he cautions his followers? "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do ; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them."†

The beads used by the lay monks cannot be viewed as mere ordinary helps to prayer, having received the benediction of the "father-abbot,"

* Ohe, jam desine Deos, uxor gratulando obtundere ;
Nisi illos tuo ex ingenio judicas,
Set nihil credas intelligere, nisi idem dictum est centies.
Terence, Heautont, act v. scene 1.

† Matt. vi. 7, 8.

and are consequently supposed to be productive of spiritual benefit to those who make use of the same; in other words, the boon of an INDULGENCE is thereby obtained. This being the proper place to allude to the origin and properties of indulgences, I shall introduce the subject by way of digression, and then return to the discipline of the Trappists.

Indulgences were originally established by Clement VI., A.D. 1350, in his extraordinary bull "*Unigenitus de pœnitentiis et remissionibus*," thirty years after the first jubilee.* The object which this crafty "head of the church" had in view was to encourage customers to crowd to the holy city, the capital of Italy, at the period of the second jubilee, which was held during his pontificate, as if to confirm the expression, that "gain is godliness." So true are the words of the poet—

"Venalia nobis
Templa, Sacerdotes, altaria, sacra, coronæ,
Ignes, thura, preces—cœlum est venale Deusque."

Clement enacted that a jubilee should take place twice in every century, although his infallible predecessor, Boniface VIII., had decreed that

* This novel doctrine was warmly disputed by Franciscus de Mayronis.

this season of rejoicing should occur but once in a hundred years.* And among the inducements held forth to the "faithful," by Leo XII. in a bull for the jubilee in 1825, to persuade them to go to Rome, was that of "*beholding the cradle of Christ!*" † Reserving for a more recent period in the history of the church, a disclosure so invaluable, and a relic so sacred as that of the "*Holy Coat of Trèves!*"

The following extract from the bull alluded to (dated Rome, May 24, 1824), exhibits the power assumed by this papal Antichrist, and the necessary conditions upon which his pardon was to be obtained: "During this year of jubilee, we mercifully in the Lord, grant and impart THE MOST PLENARY AND COMPLETE INDULGENCE, REMISSION, AND PARDON OF ALL THEIR SINS, to all the faithful in Christ, of both sexes, who are truly penitent, and have confessed, and have refreshed themselves with the holy communion, provided, if Romans or inhabitants of the city, they shall have devoutly visited these churches of the city, that of the blessed Peter and Paul, of St. John Lateran, and of St. Mary Maggiore (or the greater), at least once a-day for thirty

* Baluzii. Vitæ Pontif. Avenion. tom. i. p. 287.

† Christi Incunabula. p. 38. edit. Paris.

days, whether successive or interrupted, natural or even ecclesiastical; but if foreigners, or in any th er respect strangers, they must have devoutly visited these churches at least fifteen days: provided, also, that they shall have poured forth *pious* prayers to God for the EXALTATION of the holy church, the EXTIRPATION OF HERESIES, the concord of the catholic princes, and the salvation and tranquillity of Christendom." *

The Council of Trent teaches with respect to the doctrine of indulgences, "That after God has justified the penitent sinner by his grace, and remitted the guilt of his eternal punishment, yet his sin is not so wholly blotted out, but that there still remains the guilt of temporal punishment due to his justice, which debt the pardoned sinner must discharge either in this life by penance, or hereafter in purgatory, before he can enter the kingdom of heaven." † And "the Council further teacheth, that Christ

* P. 32. Paris edit. chez Adrien le Clerc, imprimeur de N. S. P. le Pape et de Mgr. l'Archeveque de Paris, 1824.

† Si quis post acceptam justificationis gratiam, cuilibet peccatori pœnitenti ita culpam remitti, et reatum æternæ pœnæ deleri dixerit, ut nullis remaneat reatus pœnæ temporalis exsolvendæ vel in hoc sæculo, vel in futuro in Purgatorio, antequam ad regna cœlorum aditus patere possit: anathema sit. *Con. Trid. sess.* vi. *can.* 30.

has conferred on his church the power of granting INDULGENCES, which extend to this very debt, or satisfaction, and by which she can remit it wholly, or in part, in certain circumstances, and that the use of these *celestial treasures* is very salutary to the faithful, and must be retained in the church." * Even these "celestial treasures," as they are blasphemously termed, can be applied to the souls in purgatory, and are said to have the power of effectually delivering them from this fabled prison of torment. † What an ingenious invention, and fertile plan for extracting money from the pockets of the rich! ‡ As the Romish doctors are very apt to misquote the words of Scripture, may not the exclamation of our Lord have undergone a slight alteration under the correction of these infallible guides, "How hardly

* Decretum de Indulgentiis. Cum potestas conferendi Indulgentias a Christo Ecclesiæ concessa sit. etc. *Sess.* xxv. *cap.* ix.

† Bellar. Lib. I. de Indulgent. c. ii. et iii.

‡ A few years ago the following statement was posted upon the walls of the chapels of Madrid :—"The Sacred and the Royal Bank of Piety has relieved from purgatory from it establishment in 1721, to November, 1827, 1,041,999 souls, at an expense of £1,734,703 ; for which 558,921 masses were required. Consequently each soul cost half-a-mass, or 33s. 4d." *Protest. Jour.* 1834.

shall they that are *poor* enter into the kingdom of Heaven ?"

But to enter more explicitly upon the review of this novel theory. Indulgences partake of a twofold character, and may be contradistinguished by the titles partial and plenary. The former, which an ordinary bishop has the power of dispensing, is a remission of, or a release from, part "of the temporal punishment due to sin." * The latter, which is at the exclusive disposal of the pope, is a full and entire pardon of sin, as well as of the satisfaction which, according to Rome's iniquitous teaching, remains to be endured, either in this life or in the poetic regions of purification in that which is to come. Nay more, *special* indulgences were frequently granted, on payment of certain stipends, for crimes about to be committed, which absolved not merely the party who made the purchase, but even their accomplices, from every imputation of guilt. Now, a plenary indulgence can very easily be obtained—even with far less difficulty oftentimes than a partial or limited one. For instance: going to confession, and receiving the "idol god" on a particular festival;

* Dr. Challoner's Cath. Christ.

praying for the utter *extirpation* of heretics; wearing the "scapular" of the Carmelites; the "belt" of the Augustines; the "cord" of the Franciscans; the "white scapular" of the Dominicans; or any other badge of an order; kissing or praying before a particular picture or image of a saint; pronouncing certain words, such as "*Jesu, Maria;*" with a number of other very simple matters, easy of performance, are sufficient to ensure the signal and distinguished privilege of a plenary absolution. Accordingly, thousands of individuals who, during the course of their lives, have lived utterly neglectful of religion and its obligations, when the cold hand of death rests upon their brow, earnestly desire that they may be enrolled as members of the "blessed scapular;" that ere their spirits should bid farewell to earth, and take their flight to the eternal world, they should have, were it even but one arm attired in the brown robe to which they are taught to attribute undue importance, and in which all the deceased devotees of this order are habited. Thus the habit, and the scapular, and the indulgence, and the priest, take the place of Christ! Rome, by her insidious wiles, and nefarious opiates, lulls the sinner's conscience

to repose by producing a false and unreal security, which causes the victims of her infatuation to cry "peace, peace," when there is no peace existing within their wretched breasts.

It is recorded, "that Pope John XXII. granted a pardon or indulgence of one million of years, for devoutly saying three prayers written in the chapel of the holy cross at Rome;" and "for repeating the prayer beginning with the words, '*O bone Jesu*,' power is granted to change the pains of hell into those of purgatory, and after that, those pains again into the joys of heaven!" This prayer was placed in St. Peter's church at Rome, contiguous to the high altar where the pope celebrates the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass.

It has often been a matter of serious surprise to me, why priests should repeatedly celebrate the mass, and recite the office of the church, for the spirit's repose of those who, whilst living, had performed the requisitions to which a *plenary* absolution is affixed; at the same time being perfectly cognisant of their having previously received, by virtue of a papal grant, ample forgiveness of their sins. This simple fact furnishes demonstrative evidence, that those teachers of "lying signs and wonders,"

disbelieve the tenets which Rome requires her "subjects" to place implicit and entire confidence in. Such is the genius of her jurisprudence!

I have already stated, that indulgences affording licence to commit various crimes, were bountifully dealt out by the church of Rome, to such persons as would be credulous enough to make the purchase. In confirmation of this statement, I need but refer to a work printed at Paris, A. D. 1500, by Tossan Denis, and reprinted in 1625, entitled, "*Taxa Cameræ, seu cancellariæ Apostolicæ.*" "The tax of the apostolical chamber of chancery." Of this production the Romish writer, Espencæus, says, "It is a book in which a man may learn more wickedness than in all the summaries of vices published in the world; and yet to them that will pay for it, there is given a license and absolution for the most horrid crimes. There is a price set down to his absolution that hath killed his father, mother, brother, sister, or wife, etc." *

* Digress. 2 ad. cap. 1. Epist. ad Titum.

A Saxon nobleman told Tetzel, the chief preacher of indulgences, that he had a mind to commit *a very heinous sin*, and desired an indulgence or present pardon for it. For thirty crowns of money he granted it; the nobleman pays it down, and receives his bull. After-

Being unwilling to give offence to delicate minds, I refrain from citing any of the bills of charges—

> Thus to the Pope all power is given
> To shut or ope' the gates of heaven;
> To pardon sins of every price,
> And make vice virtue—virtue vice!!

Pope Innocent VIII. was either the author or enlarger of the "Rules of the chancery tax," which were published at Rome, in 1514, and at Cologne, in 1515, and widely circulated. It is a matter of certainty that the sacred treasury of the Vatican was enriched to a large amount, by the sale of those "celestial treasures" of the church—indulgences. In Zurich alone, not less than 120,000 ducats were collected by Sampson, a Franciscan friar, for such dispensations. And so extensive was the sale of these documents, that a dowry was raised for the lady of Franchescetto Cibo, an illegitimate son of

wards this nobleman took occasion to meet Tetzel in a wood, between Jüterboch and Treblin, and breaking open his chest of indulgences, robbed him. When Tetzel threatened him with all manner of curses, the nobleman showed him his bull that he had paid so dear for, and laughing at him, told him, *this was the very sin he had a mind to commit*, when he was fully absolved." *Cheminitius. Exam. Con. Trid.* p. 745.

Pope Innocent III.,—whose character was the direct opposite to what his name would imply.

We are informed on the authority of the "Fasciculus Rerum," that a number of Roman Princes assembled at Nuremburgh, in the year 1522, and stated a hundred grievances: the third of which respected the increase of indulgences, by which, under a show of piety to churches, or for an expedition against the Turks, the popes sucked the marrow of their estates; and to heighten the imposture, they observed, that by their hireling criers and preachers, Christian piety was banished, while to advance their markets, they cry up their wares, for the granting of wonderful, unheard of, *peremptory pardons*, not only of sins already committed, but of sins that shall be committed, and also the sins of the dead: so that by the sale of these wares, together with being spoiled of our money, Christian piety was extinguished, while any one may promise himself impunity, upon paying the rate that is set upon the sin he hath a mind to commit. Hence, perjuries, murders, theft, etc., and all manner of wickedness, have at once their offspring. What wickedness will mortal men be afraid to commit, when they can promise themselves licence and impunity in sinning while they live, and, for a

little more money, indulgences may be purchased for them when they are dead." *

"I have now in my custody," writes Archbishop Secker, "a plenary indulgence granted, for a small piece of gold, at Rome, this very year,† to an absolute stranger, for himself, for his kindred to the third degree, and to thirty persons more, for whose names a proper blank is left in the instrument." Another writer says: "I learn on good authority that there are among the MSS. in the Dublin College Library, two indulgences, which were purchased from the late pope Pius VI. One of these was given to Edward Murphy, esq., and cost, including the parchment, the trouble of writing, and expense of gilding, the sum of *sixteen shillings and three pence!* It not only absolves the said Edward Murphy, and all his relations, within the third degree, from all their sins, but gives them power to include within his charter any fifty of his friends at the moment of their departure from life; and all this for *three crowns of money!* There is another similar bull preserved in the same box." ‡

This is precisely the manner in which the

* Fascicul. rerum. expetend. fol. 177. † A.D. 1745.
‡ Rev. M. Willis's Lectures.

Church of Rome deceives her members. Not content by withholding from her votaries the book of life, which she grasps with an iron hand, guards by the vaunt of her invincible power, and the threat of the thunderbolts of her anathemas, she gives the word of man, for the truth of God—a stone in place of bread—and deludes them by all sorts of fables, frauds, and impositions, in order to strengthen her illegitimate dominion over their minds and consciences; and though last, not least, to extort money for the purpose of supporting an impious, apostate court, and to aid in upholding a system opposed alike to righteousness and truth. Little wonder that the infidel pontiff, Leo X., should exclaim, as Cardinal Bembo acquaints us, "*Quam prosit nobis hæc fabula Jesu Christi!*" * And well did the famous F. Petrarch, who flourished nearly two centuries before Luther, depict the character of the Romish apostacy, when he exclaimed—

"Fontana di dolore, albergo d'ira,
Scola d'errori, e tempio d'heresia;
Gia Roma, hor Babilonia, falsa e ria,
Per cui tanto piange e si sospira;
O fucina d'inganni, o prigion d'ira,
Ove i buon muore et i mal si nutre e cria,
Di vivi inferno un gran miracol sia,
Se Christo teco al fine non s'adira."

Sonnet 108. tom. 4. Basil.

* Mornæi. Hist. Papatus. p. 820.

But to resume my description of the Cistercian order. The lay brothers perform the drudgery of the kitchen, and act generally in the capacity of servants; but are under precisely the same discipline, in most other respects, as the choir monks. The members of both denominations sleep in one spacious apartment, each monk having a *mat* for a couch, which accommodation, trifling as it is, was denied to them on the Continent. The brotherhood rise at the early hour of one in the morning, and are spared the inconvenience of dressing, as they do not take off their clothes. They assist at and celebrate several masses each day; have long mental and vocal devotional exercises; wear hair-cloth next their skin; work much in the fields; keep *perpetual* silence, expressing their wants but by signs; observe two lenten seasons in the year; partake of neither flesh nor fish, at their scanty meals, which generally are composed of little more than coarse brown bread, manufactured by themselves; and administer to each other, on each Friday throughout the year, the discipline, or flagellation—an act of penance rendered more severe and, of course, more meritorious, by

the solemn recital of the psalm "*Miserere mei Deus*"* during the painful operation.

Sunk in the lowest depths of superstition, and ignorant of the saving gospel of Christ, these deluded beings cannot venture to trust in the exclusive righteousness of Him who "died a ransom for all," and whose blood "cleanseth from all sin;" but they labour unprofitably and sinfully, to weave a robe of their own righteousness, and, by a number of penitential exercises and supererogatory observances, to remove that defilement from their souls, which the application of the precious, purifying blood of the Saviour can alone effectually eradicate and cleanse. For "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."† A grave is always had in readiness to receive as a tenant within its chill embrace the last remains of him, who by

* This mode of torture, like most of the other puerile and wicked practices in the Romish Church, is of Pagan origin. The priests of Baal, like the Cistercians, had the practice among them of whipping, lacerating, and scourging themselves, until the blood came; and the priests of the goddess Cybele, or Bellona, were wont to cut themselves with knives and lancets. *Pictet. Huit Sermons sur l'Examen des Religions*, p. 261. edit. Genêve. 1716.

† Rom. x. 4.

protracted and extreme voluntary suffering, has hastened his approach to its sombre mansion—where no lamp of faith can ever dispel its sepulchral horror, or irradiate its sable gloom.

Both the choir and lay monks make vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience;* and by virtue of a bull, issued by one of the occupiers of the papal chair, have the privilege extended to them of making these vows perpetual. Hence, after a trying noviciate of a few years, the benighted and unsocial monk becomes bound to his cloister, where he strives, by the practice of rigid observances, either to obtain an increase of merit, or with disgust for life, to hasten the termination of that existence which an all-wise Creator had bestowed for social purposes, and the advancement of objects beneficial to the human family. Thus does the unhappy solitary

* These vows are not profitable, much less necessary, but pernicious to the Christian church. From the vow of *continence* arose abominable filthinesses of all kinds in the monks' cloysters. From the vow of feigned *poverty* arose so many kinds of unprofitable drones, which devour the honey of the sedulous bees. From the vow of blinde and absolute *obedience*, flow such execrable insolencies against the lives of princes, and such horrible treasons as have frequently been perpetrated by the Jesuits. *Leigh's Body of Divinity.* London, 1654. lib. viii. p. 743.

frustrate and neutralise the designs of heavenly wisdom, and, in the words of the poet—

"Sets superstition high on virtue's throne,
Then thinks his Maker's temper like his own;
Hence are his altars stained with reeking gore,
As if he could atone for crimes by more.
Thus, whilst offended Heaven he strives in vain
T' appease by fasts, and voluntary pain,
Ev'n in repenting, he provokes again."

Nor are the words which Minutius Felix addressed to the devotees of the heathen divinities, who used, in like manner, to cut and slash themselves in honour of their gods, inapplicable to these monks:—"O, ye heathens!" said he, "what infatuation, what frenzy has seized upon you, that you thus dishonour yourselves on pretence of honouring your gods? You supplicate your gods with the mouths of your wounds. It were better to have no religion at all, than be of such a religion. Certainly those who are guilty of such fanatical excesses must be lost to all reason and common sense!"

I shall now proceed to notice the order of monks denominated Christian Brothers, or Brothers of the Christian Schools.

This order is a branch of a society which was first planted in Paris towards the close of the

XVII. century, by John Baptist de la Salle.* Prior to the French revolution, the Christian Brothers possessed many establishments throughout the Continent of Europe and the French Colonies, which were subsequently abolished, with the exception of two monasteries in Italy. At length Napoleon re-established the order; though its progress was scarcely preceptible until the restoration of the Bourbon family to the throne of France, under whose gracious auspices it once more began to flourish. Since the period of the accession of Louis Philippe, its increase appears still more visible. In France alone the Christian Brothers possess three hundred monastic establishments; in the Colonies two; and in Rome, and other parts of Italy, eight. By a brief issued by Pius VII. in 1821, the order which was originally founded at Waterford, in 1802, by the Rev. E. G. Rice, was confirmed, and extended to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. † Accordingly, at the present day, there are

* *Vide* Life of the Ven. J. B. de la Salle, by the Christian Brothers. Dublin. 1844.

† The office of Superior General of the order in Ireland was resigned in July, 1838, by the late Rev. E. G. Rice. The present General, the Rev. Mr. Reardon, is a man of high literary accomplishments and genuine worth.

several institutions of the kind in both countries, settled by papal authority.*

The Christian Brothers rise, throughout the year, at five, A. M., and forthwith proceed to their respective stalls in the chapel, where a considerable time is devoted to meditation, and the recital of the Latin office of the church.

During meals the strictest silence is observed; and in order to relieve the *tedium* which would otherwise exist, one of the novices is appointed to read some portion of what would be termed a "pious book." Indeed, during my connexion with monastic establishments, I have heard but a trifling portion of the Holy Scriptures read; and even on those occasions, which were, like angels' visits, "few and far between," but a few sentences were pronounced; whilst lying and foolish legends were dealt out profusely, chiefly with the view of edifying the young disciples. Several of the community preside over the

* This clearly exhibits the spiritual jurisdiction which papal pontiffs wickedly assume over kings and emperors. The very pope alluded to, in his bull, "*Ad Perpetuam rei Memoriam*," dated from the church of Santa Maria, the Major at Rome, the 10th of July, 1809, uses these emphatic words:—"Let them once again understand that, *by the law of Christ their sovereignty is subjected to our* throne!!!" Sabine's Hist. Christ. Church, chap. i. cent. 19. p. 553. edit. London.

schools, whilst others, who are not engaged in the "temporalities," are principally occupied in the performance of a routine of superstitious and frivolous obligations. Two hours in each day are set apart for social conversation; and certainly such an arrangement has the effect of rendering the weariness and solitariness of the cloister more supportable, and, physically speaking, less injurious. There are certain times appointed by the rules for scientific and literary studies. At ten P.M., the brothers retire to their respective apartments. Shortly afterwards all lights are extinguished, and one of the monks goes to the door of each cell, singing, "*Benedicamus Domino*," which is immediately followed by the response, "*Deo Gratias*," from the individual within. By the toll of a large bell the brethren are summoned to their various exercises. There are no particular days of fasting prescribed by the rules of this order, with the exception of the ordinary seasons marked out by the authority of the church; nor are the members thereof prohibited from making use of any kind of food that they may desire.

The rules appertaining to novices are much more rigorous and precise than those laid down for the guidance of the professed monks. The

former are not permitted to mingle or converse with the latter, nor even to occupy the same footway when outside the precincts of the cloister. On the first entrance of a young gentleman into the institute, he is embraced by all the novices, and conducted to the apartments termed the "noviciate." After the expiration of a few days, he enters upon a "retreat" for twenty or thirty days together, during which tiresome period the strictest silence is imposed upon him. Human nature, constituted as it is, scarcely is proof against the physical evils resulting from so unremitting a course of mental exercises as is assigned to the postulant during this and succeeding seasons of trial, by the master of novices, who keeps a watchful and scrutinising eye upon all his actions.

And here I feel constrained to advert to a circumstance which, though trifling in itself, yet strikingly exemplifies the fact, that Romanism is but another name for idolatry and superstition, and that monastic asylums are the hot-houses in which iniquitous and unscriptural practices are fostered and brought to maturity.

Upon entering, some years ago, the monastery Christian of the Brothers, in Mountjoy-square, Dublin, I was conducted to that part of the

establishment assigned for the postulants, when my attention was directed by the master of novices (who is a man of superior attainments) to a statue of the Virgin Mary, composed of plaster-of-Paris, which was placed upon a small altar adjoining the corridor of the noviciate. This gentleman being acquainted with the circumstance of my having deserted the maternal roof without permission, or even without giving the least intimation of my intention—as I considered it a pious severity and a meritorious duty to act in such a manner* —addressed me, in the most solemn and impressive manner, thus:—"You have, my dear brother, separated yourself from your dearest connections, and from the world; and, with a resolution praise-worthy and becoming, have cut asunder even the ties of blood; but you have made a profitable exchange in forsaking an earthly for a heavenly parent." Then pointing to the figure, he exclaimed, "Behold your mother now! her affection towards you will never become abated; and, if you prove yourself a

* Si currerint tibi Pater et Mater ingressuro Monasterium, et monstraverint ubera et lacrymis suis te voluerint retrahere, contemne lacrymas, et conculca pedibus parentes, nudusque fuge ad crucem Christi. *Vox Hieronimi; impia hæc et diabolica vox Lutherus.*

faithful imitator of her virtuous and angelic life, she will finally conduct you to glory." I have frequently observed the young "religious," in the warmth of their devotion, kiss, with the greatest ardour and intenseness of affection, the feet of this image of clay; and none either passed or repassed without making obeisance to the Madonna. I can truly say with Melancthon, "I shudder when I think of the honour which I paid to images when I was in the papacy." *

The idolatrous doctrine of image-worship is in strict accordance with the laws of the Tridentine Council, though diametrically opposed to reason and the commands of God. What saith the Council?—

"Moreover, images of Christ, or of the Virgin Mother of God, and of other saints, must be provided and retained, in churches especially; and to them must due honour and *worship* be imparted; not that confidence is to be put in them, as did the heathens of old who placed their hope in their idols, but because the honour thus paid them is referred to their prototypes; so that by these images we kiss, and in whose presence we, with uncovered head, prostrate

* Cohorresco quando cogito quomodo ipse accesserim ad statuas in papatu. *Explicat. Evang.*

ourselves, we adore Christ, and worship these saints whose likenesses they bear."*

Romish writers have absurdly attempted to draw nice distinctions between the various kinds of worship, termed *latria*, *hyperdulia*, and *dulia*. What do the majority of Romanists, brought up in ignorance, as if it were the "mother of devotion," know of such distinctions? It is well known that their adoration, in most instances, terminates with the object before which they bow the knee. Even amongst the more enlightened and better educated, priestly definitions of the degrees of worship are not attended to; and the influence of superstition leads them to forget the Deity in the representation so strongly recommended to their veneration and respect by their spiritual guides. Religious enthusiasm, emanating from

* Imagines porrò Christi, Deiparæ Virginis, et aliorum sanctorum, in templis præsertim habendas et retinendas, eisque debitum honorem et venerationem impertiendam, non quod credatur inesse aliqua in iis divinitas vel virtus, propter quam sint colendæ; vel quod fiducia in imaginibus sit figenda, veluti olim fiebat e Gentibus, quæ in idolis spem suam collocabant, sed quoniam honos qui eis exhibetur refertur ad prototypa quæ illæ repræsentant; ita ut per imagines, quas osculamur et coram quibus caput aperimus et procumbimus, Christum adoremus, et Sanctos quorum illæ similitudinem gerunt, veneremur." &c. *Con. Trid. Sess.* xxv. *de Invoc. vener.*

gross and erroneous views of the object of worship, leads necessarily to the rankest species of idolatry.*

It is an incontrovertible fact, that devout Romanists, or devotees, are more warmly attached to the Virgin than to Christ. And in support of this assertion I need but refer to the circumstance of the coronation of the image of the Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception, which event took place in the church of Gesu Vecchio, in the city of Naples, so recently as the 30th of December, 1826. At the time that the crown was placed upon the head of the infant Jesus, there was a general movement; but when the Madonna was crowned, the multitude could no longer contain themselves; and the shout of the men, the cries, the out-stretched imploring hands, the tears and convulsive shrieks of the women, showed how vehemently and profoundly they adored the

* Many writers in the Romish church deny that there is any difference between the two words, and admit, "that it is one and the same virtue of religion which containeth them both! If some say, that it is idolatry and mortal sin to give *latria* to a saint or image, which ought only to receive *dulium;* and if others tell you that these words signify the same thing, let a man do what he will, he incurs the guilt of idolatry, in the opinion either of the one or the other of these parties. *Hamilton's Tracts*, p. 35.

Virgin, and worshipped her image. After this pompous ceremony was ended, the archbishop of Naples, and the priests, pronounced certain sentences and responses, in which the unlimited sovereignty of the Virgin, over all nature, was unhesitatingly proclaimed.* There is not a district in the papal states, where popery reigns triumphant, in which similar scenes are not enacted. Even Cassander, a Romish writer, acknowledges, that the worship paid by the people to images and statues, was equal to the worst of the ancient pagans.† And so intent were the popish clergy on perpetuating image-worship in England that, according to Sir Edward Coke, an express law was passed, by which it was enacted, "That any persons who affirm images ought not to be worshipped, be holden in strong prison until they take an oath and swear to worship them."‡

I shall now turn to Bellarmine, Thomas Aquinas, and the Councils of Frankfort and Nice, and hear what opinions they entertain on the subject.

Bellarmine writes :—"The question proposed

* Christ. Exam. Feb. 1827, pp. 149, 151.

† Nihil a nostris reliqui factum esse videatur, &c.—Geo. Cassand. in consult. de imagin. &c. pp. 175.

‡ Inst. iii. p. 49. Rich. II. cap. 5.

is, with what sort of worship are images to be honoured? There are three opinions.

"The second opinion is, that the same honour is due to the image as to the exemplar, and thence that the image of Christ is to be adored with the worship of *latria;* the image of the Blessed Virgin with the worship of *hyperdulia;* and the images of the other saints with the worship of *dulia.* Thus, Alexander, part 3, quest. 30, last art.; the Blessed Thomas, part 3, quest. 25, art. 3; and thus also Cajetan, the Blessed Bonaventure, Marsilius, Almayn, Carthusian, and others."*

The angelic doctor, Thomas Aquinas, says:— "It is thus, therefore, to be decided, that no reverence is due to the image of Christ in respect of its being any substance, say carved or painted wood, because reverence is due only to a rational nature. It remains, therefore, that reverence is

* Proponitur quæstio, quo genere cultus imagines sint honorandæ. Tres sunt sententiæ.

Secunda opinio est, quod idem honor debeatur imagini et exemplari; et proinde Christi imago sit adoranda cultu latriæ; Beatæ Maria cultu hyperduliæ; sanctorum aliorum cultu duliæ. Ita Alexander, 3 par. quæs. 30, art. ult. B. Thomas, 3 par. quæs. 25, art. 3; et ibidem Cajetanus, B. Bonaventura, Marsilius, Almayn, Carthusianus, et alii. *Bellarminus de Imag. Sanctis.* c. xx. lib. 2.

shown to it only in respect of its being an image; and thus it follows, that *the same reverence should be paid to the image of Christ as to Christ himself!* Since, therefore, Christ is adored with the worship of *latria*, it follows that his *image* is to be adored with the worship of *latria*."*

But to proceed to the acknowledged decisions of the second Council of Nice. Referring to the proper degree of worship to be rendered to representations of Christ, or of departed saints, the Council thus clearly expresses itself:—

"And to give them the salutation and honorary worship, not indeed the true *latria* which is according to the faith, which belongs to the divine nature only. * * * * * * *

For the honour of the image passes to the

* Sic ergo dicendum est, quod imagini Christi in quantum est res quædam (puta lignum sculptum vel pictum) nulla reverentia exhibetur, quia reverentia non nisi rationali naturæ debetur. Relinquitur ergo quod exhibeatur ei reverentia solùm, in quantum est imago, et sic sequitur quod eadem reverentia exhibeatur imagini Christi, et ipsi Christo. Cùm ergò Christus adoretur adoratione latriæ, consequens est, quod ejus imago sit adoratione latriæ adoranda.—*Tertia pars Summæ Theol. S. Thomæ Aquinatis. Romæ in ædibus populi Romani.* 1686. *Quest.* 52, *Art.* 3.

prototype, and he who worships the image, worships the substance of him who is depicted."*

At the Council of Frankfort, held A.D. 794, "The question respecting the recent Council of Constantinople, which was held concerning images, was brought upon the carpet, in which it was written, that those should be accursed who did not pay service or adoration to images, as to the Divine Trinity. Our above-mentioned most holy fathers *despised service and adoration in every way*, and, with one agreement *condemned them*."† We have, therefore, the Councils of Constantinople and Frankfort con-

* Και ταυταις ασπασμον και τιμητικην προσκυνησιν απονεμειν, ου μεν την κατα πιστιν ημω ναληθινην λατρειαν, η πρεπει μονη τη θεια φυσει.

Η γαρ της εικονος τιμη επι το Πρωτοτυπον διαβαινει. Και ο προσκυνων την εικονα, προσκυνει εν αυτη τ8 εγγραφομενθ την υποστασιν. *Concilium Nicænum.* 2. *Labbæi et Cossarti.*

† Allata est in medium quæstio de novâ Græcorum synodo, quam de adorandis imaginibus Constantinopoli fecerunt, in quâ scriptum habebatur, ut qui imaginibus sanctorum ita ut Deificæ Trinitati, servitium aut adorationem non impenderent, anathema judicarent. Qui supra sanctissimi patres nostri *omminodis* adorationem et servitutem contempserunt, atque consentientes condemnaverunt. *Concilium Francofordiense, etc. Can.* 2. *Labbæi et Cossarti.*

demning and anathematising those of Nice and Trent! Let us hear no more of the *unanimity* and *infallibility* of the Church of Rome! Ecclesiastical history abounds with instances of decrees, passed by one infallible head, reversed by another; and councils have dared to nullify proceedings established by former councils, as if, in asserting infallibility, to fulfil the proverb —"*Lucus a non lucendo.*"

But to resume my narration of monastic discipline. After the expiration of a few months the postulant receives a black gown, when an imposing and *ad captandum* ceremony attends its reception. On this occasion, strange to say, he renounces the name conferred at baptism, and assumes that of some saint in the Romish calendar. Once in each day, or more frequently, the younger brothers are required to make a public confession of their faults to the master of novices; and after having received absolution, and being enjoined a suitable penance, the humble monks kiss the floor as an expression of their obedience.

Strict discipline regulates every movement of the young disciples. They are seldom permitted to go beyond the precincts of their gloomy dwelling; and even when this privilege is enlarged, they are accompanied by a professed

monk, but more generally by the person to whom the responsibility of their training is entrusted. During the probationary term, which is usually about two years, the novices are occasionally obliged to perform menial occupations, in order to exercise them in humility and self-denial. A neglect of the duty imposed upon them would subject the offenders to the mortification of having to take their meals upon their knees—a punishment to which I had the humiliation of being once subjected—or to some other penitential act.* They are seldom permitted to correspond with their relatives or friends; nor are they allowed to receive letters, unless all epistolary communications are first submitted to the strict *surveillance* of the master of novices. One monk is not permitted to enter the chamber of another, or to converse with a brother, without direct permission from the superior.

* In a convent in the United States, the inmates, for slight acts of disobedience, were subjected to many austere penances, as remaining prostrate for a length of time, making the sign of the cross on the floor with the tongue, eating a crust of bread for the morning's "portion," kissing the floor, kneeling for a considerable time, and other similar degradations. *Cobbin's Book of Popery.*

In the chapel of each monastery, which is gorgeously decorated, the transubstantiated wafer is constantly preserved, and a perpetual light, or vestal fire, kept continually burning in its honour, and each monk makes a genuflexion when passing the door of the oratory. Various sacred relics are richly enshrined, and placed on the altar to attract attention, and to elicit pious and devotional feelings.* The first Sabbath in each month, and the nine days preceding the festival of the Incarnation of our Lord, are seasons of the greatest solemnity with the Christian Brothers, on which occasions silence and retirement are strictly observed. Like all other monastic societies, the members of this order vow poverty, chastity, and obedience; but they are not permitted by their constitutions either to wear the "surplice," or to take part in the "divine office" of the church.

Having thus given a brief account of the discipline to which the monks of the order of

* The Pagans, in like manner, consecrated to their gods a variety of images, both embossed and painted, and placed them in their temples, raised them upon their altars, enshrined them in a costly manner, crowned them with flowers aud smoked them with incense. *Huit. Serm. sur l'Examen des Religions*, p. 264 edit. Genève, 1716.

Christian Brothers are subjected, I would conclude with the remark, that there are among them men of the most cultivated minds, and sincere in their profession, who, were it not for the ruinous and soul-destroying system with which they are intimately connected, would become luminaries of the first magnitude in the literary, and be ornaments and blessings to the social world.

The constitutions of the Presentation order are similar to those of that which I have just been describing. The founders of it were originally connected with the Christian Brothers; but considering their rules and discipline too rigid, they established a monastic society upon less objectionable and more lenient principles, having previously obtained, for that purpose, the pope's dispensation and permission. The Presentation monks have but two establishments—one in Cork, and the other in Killarney—although, some few years ago, they also possessed a third in the neighbourhood of Youghal; but the late Superior, Father Benedict Murphy, and four of the brethren, having abjured the idolatrous and superstitious tenets of Romanism, and embraced the glorious and saving doctrines of the Reformed faith, Rome is too cunning to

make any attempt to revive the order in that locality.

The associations, which an allusion to Youghal recal to my memory, are painful in the extreme, and harrow up my feelings, filling me with the bitterest sorrow and remorse. When I take a retrospective survey of the time worse than lost in storing my mind with fabulous legends and impious doctrines, and the devoted manner in which I laboured to instil the poison of human inventions into the minds and hearts of hundreds of the young, I am struck with horror at the recollection ; and my earnest desire is to embrace every opportunity of undoing the mischief that has been done, and promoting that faith which I once laboured to destroy. I shall have no greater joy than to hear that those children whom I was the unhappy means of deceiving, have been illuminated from above, and are walking in the truth ; and that the adults, who looked up to me for divine instruction, and received at my hands the poison of asps instead of the bread of life, may also obtain an abundant entrance into the glorious liberty of the children of God ! I may, indeed, say with Paul, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief;" but I "obtained

mercy." And I earnestly pray that God's grace may not be bestowed on me in vain!

It is a source of real pleasure to me, and certainly calls for unbounded gratitude to the Almighty giver of every good and perfect gift, that several of those whom early acquaintance, familiar intercourse, and ardent friendship, cemented to my affection, have been emancipated from slavish subjection to Rome's authority, and brought to acknowledge—not the pope's, but Christ's supremacy. And my joy is increased by the consideration that they are now preparing for the ministry of the gospel. May the Lord emancipate many other precious souls from the papal bondage.

The Presentation monks are not so wealthy as the Christian Brothers, although they are both privileged to make a collection annually in the chapel of the diocese where their respective institutions are established. In addition to the aid they receive in this manner, they also solicit private subscriptions and bequests. And it is much to be regretted, that professing Protestants, of great respectability, have no hesitation in subscribing to their funds, and becoming enrolled as the patrons and supporters

of monkish establishments. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

"It fills, and well it may,
The Christian with astonishment to know
That Protestants can plead the Papal cause;
That men, whose martyr'd ancestry pulled down
That Dagon, should combine to set him up!"

CHAPTER VII.

MONKISH LEGENDS.

The legendary writings and mystical theology of Metaphrastes, and other contemporary author of school divinity, engrossed the attention of the studious, and filled the minds of a credulous people with the ridiculous miracles and fabulous memoirs of pretended saints. REV. M. BRENAN.

MONKS, friars, and their biographers, were the prolific sources from which proceeded most of the egregious superstitions that have, century after century, desecrated the Christian church, and rendered the Christian name odious to many. And it is deeply to be lamented, that, in an age like the present, when numerous facilities are afforded for the spread of sacred and profane literature, so large a section of mankind should be so darkened in their understandings, and so enfeebled in their intellects, as to become influenced by the lying fables of the dark ages, when the infamous productions of Metaphrastes and Bollandus were forced

upon the Christian world as truths worthy of being received. Nor does the Romish church hesitate to put forward amidst the light and intellect of the nineteenth century, the gross impositions of these writers, and their fabulous heroes—the singular incidents of whose lives are profusely scattered over every page of the *Acta Sanctorum*, and whose names form a long category in every book of popish devotion. "Alas, what follies," says Erasmus, commenting on the abuses which crept into the church, "follies at which even I myself can scarcely help blushing! Do we not see each country laying claim to its particular saint? Each misery has its saint and its candle. This one relieves you in tooth-ache, that one gives assistance at child-birth, a third restores your stolen goods, a fourth saves you in shipwreck, and a fifth keeps watch over your flocks. Some of these are all-powerful in many things at once. This is particularly the case with the Virgin, the mother of God, to whom the vulgar attribute almost more than to her Son. In the midst of all these follies, if some odious sage arise, and, giving a counter note, exclaim, (as in truth he may,) 'You will not perish miserably if you live as Christians.' You will

redeem your sins, if to the money which you give you add hatred of the sins themselves, tears, vigils, prayers, fastings, and a thorough change in your mode of life. Yon saint will befriend you if you imitate his life. If some sage, I say, charitably duns such words into their ears, Oh! of what felicity does he not deprive their souls, and into what trouble, what despondency, does he not plunge them! The mind of man is so constituted, that imposture has a much stronger hold upon it than truth. If there is any saint more fabulous than another, for instance, a St. George, a St. Christopher, or a St. Barbara, you will see them adored with much greater devotion than St. Peter, St. Paul, or Christ himself." *

In the "Constitutions" of the abbot Benedict we read: that after supper the brethren were to assemble, and some one of them was to read aloud from the Collations of Cassian, or the Lives of the Fathers, or some other edifying book, but not the Pentateuch, nor the other books of the Old Testament; as this famous man was of opinion that it would not be profitable for persons of ordinary understandings

* D'Aubigne's Hist. Reform. Eccomium Moriæ, op. iv. pp. 444—450.

to hear them.* Such a mode of infusing into weak minds her deleterious teaching is quite in character with a church that will not bear the light, nor allow her doctrines to be brought to the bar of Scripture or reason. She opens wide to the enthusiastic gaze of her votaries the productions of heated imaginations and fertile fancies, replete with all kinds of delusive vanities and dangerous deceits, and closes on them the word of life ; and uttering an anathema, from which there lies no appeal, against all who would presume to open its illuminated pages, or judge of its contents, she seals it up for ever from their view ; †

* Mais pourquoi défendre la lecture de ces livres avant complenes? C'est apparemment parce qu'il s'y rencontre certaines histoires qui peuvent laisser dans l'esprit des impressions qui pourroient revenir et inquieter les Religieux pendant le sommeil. Peut-étre, aussi parce que ces histoires des guerres de Josué, des Juges, et des Rois frappent trop vivement l'imagination, et remuent trop les passions. C'est, dit on, pour cette dernière raison, qu' Ulphilas, Evèque des Goths, ne voulut pas traduire en sa langue les Livres des Rois, de peur d'allumer de plus en plus la passion de ces peuples, qui n'étoit dejà que trop grande pour la guerre. *Calmet.*

† Prohibemus etiam, ne libros Veteris Testamenti aut Novi, laici permittantúr habere ; nisi forte psalterium, vel breviarium pro diviniis officiis, aut horas beatæ

blasphemously asserting, in direct opposition to the declaration of its divine Author, that it does not contain all things necessary for salvation, that it is dark and obscure, and unprofitable for the people.*

The poison which is instilled into the minds of the credulous devotees of the Romish church, under pretence of administering to them edifying and pious instruction, may be extracted from the following select flowers, culled from the garden of popish theology. The subjoined is an account of the estatica of St. Francis, taken from the Roman Breviary :—

"Francis, a truly faithful servant and minister of Christ, two years before he yielded his soul to heaven, when on a lofty eminence apart, which is called the mountain of Alvernia, he entered upon the fast of forty days in honour of the archangel Michael, being overspread more abundantly than usual with the sweetness of

Mariæ, aliquis ex devotione habere velit. Sed ne præmissos libros habeant in vulgari translatos, arctissimè inhibemus. *Concil. Tolosan. P. Gregory IX.* an. ch. 1229. *Phil. Labbæi et Gab. Cossartii,* tom. xi. pars. 1. *Lutetiæ Parisiorum,* 1671.

* Conc. Trid. Sess. iv. Decret. de Can. Scrip. Bellar. de verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. 3. Ind. libr. prohibit. Regula iv.

heavenly contemplation, and being inflamed with a more ardent fire of celestial desires, began to feel more abundantly the gift of divine influences.

"Whilst, therefore, he was drawn upwards to God by the seraphic ardour of his desires, and was transformed by the compassionate tenderness of his feelings before Him, who was pleased of his great love to be crucified; on a certain morning, near the feast of the exaltation of the holy cross, praying on the side of a mountain, he saw, as it were, the appearance of one of the seraphim, having six shining wings like as of fire, to descend from the height of heaven, which, with rapid flight, reaching that part of the air near the man of God, appeared not only as having wings, but also crucified, having his hands, indeed, and feet extended, and fastened to a cross, but the wings in a wonderful manner so disposed on every side, that he could raise two above his head, and expand two to fly, and with the other two he could veil his whole body, by wrapping them round him. Seeing this, he was greatly amazed, and his mind partook of joy, mixed with grief; and whilst in the gracious aspect of him, so miraculously as well as familiarly appearing to him, he con-

ceived a certain overflowing joy, and the dreadful affixion of the cross which he had beheld, pierced his soul with the sword of sympathising pain.

"He understood, indeed, by his teaching within, who appeared outwardly to him, that although the infirmity of suffering by no means comported with the immortality of the seraphic spirit, nevertheless the vision of this same being had been presented to his own view for the very purpose, that he himself, the friend of Christ, might foreknow that he would be transformed into the express image of Jesus Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of the flesh, but by the universal fire of his soul. Wherefore the disappearing vision, after the secret of familiar converse, inflamed his mind within with the seraphic ardour of itself, but it marked his flesh without with a figure like him who was crucified, as though a certain impression, by a seal, followed the previous liquefactive powers of fire; for immediately *the marks of the nails began to be seen in his hands and feet*, with the heads appearing on the lower part of his hands, and on the upper part of his feet, and their points projecting on the opposite side. *His right side, also, was covered with a red*

wound, as if pierced with a spear, *which frequently issued forth sacred blood*, besprinkled his coat and his breeches.

"Afterwards, therefore, Francis shone forth a new man, by a new and wonderful miracle; he appeared renowned by a singular privilege, not conceded to past ages, namely, being adorned with sacred stigmas, he descended from the mountain, bringing with him the image of him who was crucified, graven not in tables of stone by the hand of an artist, but written by the finger of the living God on fleshly members. Forasmuch as the seraphic man well knew that it was a good thing to conceal the sacrament of the King, conscious of the royal secret, he hid those sacred little marks as much as he could. But because it is God's property to reveal for his own glory those great things which the Lord himself does, who had impressed privately those little marks, by the same openly showed certain miracles, that the secret and wondrous virtue of those stigmas might appear manifest by the distinctness of the marks. Moreover, Benedict XI. was pleased that a matter so wonderful, and so well attested, and lauded with peculiar praises and favours

in the bulls of popes,* should be celebrated by an anniversary solemnity; which afterwards Paul V. extended to the universal church, that the hearts of the faithful might be inflamed to the love of Christ crucified." †

Francis was considered by his order as a second Christ, and in every respect equal to the Divine founder of the church. These opinions were promulgated in a work, entitled, "The Golden Book of the Conformities of the Holy Father St. Francis, with the Life of our Saviour Jesus Christ;" written in 1383, by Bartholomew Albizi, a Franciscan monk, of Pisa. ‡ Therein the author salutes Francis with a prayer, such as should only be addressed to the Redeemer; first, blasphemously calling him "typical Jesus," and then beseeching him to cure the sins, to heal

* Vide Librum conformit. lib. iii. confor. 31, par 2, p. 308. Apparet ergo viii. Bullis summorum pontificum scilicet tribus Gregorii IX. tribus Alexand. IV. etc. beat. Francisus stigmatizatus fuit.

† Rom. Brev. Aut. Par. p. 423. Lisbon, 1786.

‡ Lib. aureus, inscrip. lib. conform. vite beati ac seraphici patris Francisci ad vitam Jesu Christi Domini nostri, correctus et illustrat. Bononiæ, 1590. *Noveau Dictionaire Hist. Crit.* tom. i. *apud.* art. *Albizi.* p. 217.

the spiritual maladies of souls, and finally to give unto them a place in the kingdom of heaven.* He also enumerates forty points of resemblance between Christ and Francis, in which the marks of wounds on his person are included, which were multiplied in 1651, in a work written by a Spanish monk, to four thousand! Even Pierre d'Olive, a native of Serignan, in Languedoc, who had acquired a shining reputation for his learning, sanctity, and writings, and who sharply and openly censured the corruption of the Church of Rome, in his "Postilla," partook so much of the extravagancies of the age in which he lived, as to believe that Francis was wholly and entirely transformed into the person of Christ!† The bones of this weak enthusiast were raised by order of John XXII., and publicly burnt with his writings, in 1325. ‡

With reference to the marks of wounds

* Francisce Jesu typice dux formaq.; minorum, per te Christi mirificè sunt gesta, et donor. Mala pater egregie propelle animorum sedis nobis perpetuas da regni supernorum. *Nouv. Dict. Hist. Christ.*

† Totum Christo configuratum. *Litera Magistrorum de Postilla Fratris P. Joh. Olivi,* in Baluzii *Miscel.* tom. i. p. 213.

‡ Raynald, ad. An. 1325, sect. 20.

upon the body of Francis, the ecclesiastical historian, observes: "That St. Francis had upon his body the marks or impressions of the five wounds of Christ, is not to be doubted, since this fact is proved by a great number of unexceptionable witnesses. But, as he was a most superstitious and fanatical mortal, it is undoubtedly evident, that he imprinted on himself those holy wounds, that he might resemble Christ, and bear about in his body a perpetual memorial of the Redeemer's sufferings. Be that as it may, the Franciscan monks, having found these marks upon the dead body of their founder, took this occasion of making him appear to the world as honoured by heaven above the rest of mortals, and invented, for this purpose, the story of Christ's having miraculously transferred his wounds to him." *

As a further specimen of monkish imposition and priestcraft, I give the following citation from the writings of a modern saint of Rome's manufacture: "It is related, that Jane, the venerable sister of Jesus and Mary, of the order of St. Francis, while she was

* Mosh. Eccles. Hist.

on one occasion meditating on the infant Jesus persecuted by Herod, heard a loud noise, as if some one were pursued by armed soldiers. A most beautiful infant, overwhelmed with affliction, and flying from his enemies, instantly appeared, and said to her, 'My dear sister Jane, assist and save me! I am Jesus of Nazareth, and am flying away from sinners who seek to take away my life, and persecute me with more cruelty than Herod did. Do you save me!'"*

The following circumstance is recorded of St. Philip Nerius, founder of the Congregation of Priests: "About the year 1555, when Philip, who had many followers, journeyed to the place where are the baths of Diocletian, he saw standing upon a wall, which had fallen down from age, the devil, in the form of a man; and when he observed him more closely, he beheld him at one time appear as a youth, and presently afterwards as an old man. Hence discovering the tricks of the devil, he ordered him in the name of Christ to discover himself. Overcome by this, the evil one betook himself to flight; and as he

* Ap. P. Genov. Dol. di Maria. Ligouri's Dis. p. 153.

departed he filled the place with so offensive a stench, that even the beasts could not tolerate it, and thus made it evident to Philip, and the other spectators, who he was." *

The "Life of St. Andrew Salus," presents the reader with the following agreeable treat: "When it was dark, and Andrew, who was watching about the middle of the night, secretly offered up in the sanctuary of his heart prayers and vows to God and the blessed martyr, a devil suddenly came to him, surrounded with many other devils, and bearing in his hand an axe; whilst of the other devils some were furnished with daggers, others with clubs, some with swords and lances, others with ropes, and all fought under that dragon or serpent who was the commander, about whom they frequently assembled to the dismay of the blessed Andrew. Attended, therefore, with these companions, and raising a loud shout, that most wicked devil, who assumed the form of an Æthiop, rushed upon the saint with great fury, as if about to strike him with the axe which he held in his hand. But the blessed youth, raising his hands to

* Acta Sanctorum Maii., tom. vi. Antverpiæ, 1688 Die Vigesima Sexta Maii.

the Lord, with many tears, preferred the following petition, '*Sancte Joannes theologe, opitulare mihi!*' 'O holy John, the theologian, succour me!' Immediately it thundered on high, and there were voices, as if proceeding from a crowd. And behold an old man appeared, remarkable by the greatness of his body and eyes, and rather bald, with his face shining above the sun, surrounded with a great multitude, to whom he said in an angry tone, 'Shut the doors, for no one shall escape from our hands.' And all the Moors being thus shut in, one of them whispered in the ear of his companions, '*Væ nobis, quia Joannes ille, ut vehemens imprimis est, gravissima nobis, tormenta infliget.*' 'Woe to us, for that John, who is a most violent fellow, will inflict upon us the most acute torments.' But that venerable old man, when at his command his companions had taken off the chain from the blessed Andrew's neck, and had given it to him, going to the outer door, stood there, and ordered them to bring to him the Moors, one by one. And he ordered the first to be extended on the ground, and he tripled the blessed Andrew's chain, and thus inflicted nearly one hundred blows upon

the wretch, who cried out, after the fashion of a man, 'Mercy, mercy, mercy!' When he had done this, he ordered another to be extended, who was treated precisely in the same manner. Meanwhile the blessed Andrew, when he heard this pitiable cry for mercy, could not help laughing. But when they were dismissed thus beaten, the companions of John cried out, saying to each of them, 'Depart and tell those things, if you will, to your father Satan.'"*

"In the 'Cistercian Chronicles' it is related that, in passing through a wood, a monk of Brabante, who was travelling on Christmas night, heard a noise which resembled the groans of a new-born infant. He went to the place from whence the cries proceeded, and saw a beautiful babe in the midst of the snow, trembling with cold and bathed in tears. Touched with pity, the religious instantly dismounted, and approaching the infant, said: 'O, my child! why are you so abandoned in this snow, to weep and die?' The infant answered: 'Alas! how can I but weep when I see myself so deserted by

* Collarium ad Diem 28. Maii. Vita S. Andreæ Sali.

all, and find that no one receives, or takes compassion on me?' After these words the infant disappeared, giving the religious to understand, that by this vision he wished to reprove the ingratitude of men, who, while they see him born in a cave for their sake, leave him to weep without pity for his sufferings." *

I have now to direct the reader's attention to a remarkable incident in the life of the abbess Teresa, a Romish saint, as recorded by herself. In her autobiography, a work stamped with the high approval of the court of Rome, she states, that on one occasion, while performing her wonted devotions, she was, by some supernatural agency suddenly thrust into hell, the entrance to which she describes to resemble that of an oven. She continues her strange narrative in a mingled strain of the melancholy and the ridiculous; and concludes by affirming, that she positively laboured under no delusion, but was really in the dark prison of the damned, and that during her detention, she endured such excruciating agony, as no human language could describe, nor mortal tongue express. After the liberation of this sainted

* St. Ligouri's Dis. and Med. trans. from the Italian.

heroine from the regions of despair, several physicians who examined her person, gave their testimony to the peculiar change which was wrought on her body, by means of some unknown torture. Much doubt, however, prevailed all the time, as to the certainty of Teresa's statements. But all incredulity became finally removed; and bishops, cardinals, and popes, received the entire tale, as a truth worthy of being accredited. And to complete the farce, the subject of this famous imposture was actually canonized as a saint of the Most High!

The "Life of St. Teresa, written by herself," from which I have gleaned the preceding romance, is a production of high repute, although, strange to say, but few copies are extant in this country, the cause of which is sufficiently obvious not to require explanation. I well remember that when a novice in the monastic order, I was prohibited from perusing this book, notwithstanding my ardent desire to be enriched by its lore; possibly, as those who had the responsibility of my education, considered that it would be productive of evil rather than good, for me to scan its pages, or learn its contents. Thus

my acquaintance with Teresa's life, was reserved for a more remote period, when I should become fully indoctrinated in Rome's absurdities, mysteries, mysticisms, and deceits!

I shall now furnish the reader with the account of an estatica, the subject of which was St. Rita, of Roccha Porrenna Cassia, in Umbria, a nun of the Augustinian order. The account is taken from the Roman Breviary; a considerable portion of which, monks and priests are obliged, under pain of incurring the severest censures of the church, to recite daily for their spiritual edification and instruction:

"On a certain day, whilst the saint was more earnestly praying to the image of Christ hanging from the cross, a thorn from the crown of the crucifix was so struck through her forehead, that she suffered an incurable wound till her death; from which, in addition to her keenest sense of pain, a foul corruption issued. From whence, lest it should excite disgust in the sisters, she lived a recluse with God. But in the secular year, being forbidden by Antistita to go to Rome with the other sisters, on account of the deformity of the ulcer, she grew well on a sudden, on wiping the wound, which, however, on her return

home, broke out again. After some years, being attacked with heavy sickness, she bore it most patiently for four years, at which time a blooming rose from a small garden, in a very rough winter, and two very fresh figs, were brought to her. Now being near her death, she heard Christ the Lord, together with the blessed Virgin, calling her to the kingdom of heaven. And so, having received all the sacraments of the church, she slept in the Lord, on the eleventh of the kalends of June, in the year after the birth of Christ, 1443. Her body, to this day uncorrupted, fragrant with the sweetest odour, is piously worshipped. Urban VIII. added her to the number of the saints, conspicuous by her miracles before and after her death." *

I do not hesitate to assert, that were it not for the prompt and resolute exposure of the base and impious frauds some time since carried on in the vicinity of Youghal, with the privity, and under the sanction, of Priest Foley, we should have, ere now, some noted personage or another, claiming saintship for those Magdalen impostors. The diabolical imposition of this pretended estatica is admirably exposed

* Rom. Brev. Vern Par. p. 735. Lisb. 1786.

in a little work written by the respected rector of that town the Rev. John Aldworth.* It is worthy of notice that a Roman Catholic gentleman, who travelled from London to Youghal, in order to have ocular demonstration of the farce that was acting at the College of St. Mary, returned to London disgusted with the scene he witnessed.

The following amusing account of a satanic apparition being vanquished by the abbot, St. Walthen, and the popish wafer, is quoted from the Lives of the Saints:

"When upon a certain occasion St. Walthen stood praying before the great altar, with his eyes and hands raised to heaven, the evil spirit transfigured himself into many shapes. He first ran about the pavement in the form of a mouse, playing many antics; afterwards in the shape of a grunting pig; afterwards in the form of a black dog, barking; afterwards of a howling wolf; and lastly, of a roaring, long-horned bull.

"But the saint caused all these illusory forms to vanish, by making the sign of the

* The Estatica of Youghal compared with the wonders of the Tyrol, in a Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shrewsbury.

cross. At last, that spirit, who has a thousand artifices, and who in a thousand ways endeavours to disturb quiet hearts, exhibited himself in the form of a great soldier in armour, sitting upon the back of a horrible horse with a whale's hide, which emitted fire and smoke from its nostrils and mouth, and shook his lance against the man who was praying. The saint jumping up as fast as he could by the impulse of the Spirit, and going to the altar, reverentially took up the ivory pix,* which contained the holy body of the Lord, and signing himself with it, and running like a second David against the infernal Goliath, and inventing a new name for him, under the dictation of the Spirit, said: 'Behold, O execrable mouse, O terrible soldier, thou satellite of Satan, thy Judge is about to send thee into hell: wait for him if thou darest!' Overcome by this speech, the infernal horseman disappeared."†

We are likewise informed that, on one occasion, when St. Dominic was "sitting at a window with many of his brethren, and was

* The vessel wherein the popish wafer is tabernacled.

† Acta Sanctorum. Vita S. Waltheni Abbatis. Dei Tertia Augusti, tom. i. p. 264.

preaching to the sisterhood, the enemy of mankind, in the likeness of a sparrow, flying over the sisters in the air, but so near the ground that you might lay hold of him, interrupted the preaching, which when the saint perceived, he said to sister Maximilla, 'Rise and lay hold of him, and bring him to me.' She rising took him without any difficulty, and gave him through the window to the holy man. But he began hastily to pluck his feathers off, saying, 'O thou enemy! O thou enemy!' And when he had plucked all his feathers off, the devil meanwhile crying out lamentably, and all those present laughing at him, Dominic cast him out, saying, 'Depart, thou enemy of the human race, fly now, if thou canst!'

"It happened there also, that this man of God, who had watched till the middle of the night in prayer, departing from the church, wrote by candlelight, sitting at the head of his dormitory. And behold the devil appearing in the form of a monkey, began strutting about before him, making ridiculous gestures with grimaces. Then the saint beckoned to him to stand still, giving him a lighted candle to hold before him; and he, although he held it, continued to make his grimaces. Meanwhile

the candle was finished, and began to burn the monkey's fingers, and he began to lament as if tortured by the flame, whereas he who burns in the flames of hell ought not to fear a bodily flame. But the saint beckoned him to stand still. Why should I say more? He stood there until the whole of his forefinger was burnt down to the socket, crying out more and more loudly from the torture. Thus the man of God, strong in faith, having taken him in who sought to impose upon him, gave him a sharp blow with a cane, which he always carried with him, saying, 'Depart, thou wicked man;' and the blow sounded as if he had struck a dry bladder full of wind. Upon this, casting himself against the nearest wall, he disappeared, leaving behind him an ill odour, which discovered who he was.

"Sister Cæcilia, a girl aged seventeen, first received the habit of the order from the hand of the holy father Dominic. She beheld with her eyes, and heard with her ears, and faithfully narrated the things which are related."*

We are informed by an historian of no mean standing, that after the decease of Thomas à Beckett, the arrogant and disaffected

* Acta Ampliora S. Dominici Confessoris. Die quartâ Augusti. c. xiii.

Archbishop of Canterbury, "it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ to irradiate his glorious martyr with many miracles, that it might appear to all the world he had obtained a victory suitable to his merits. None who approached his sepulchre in faith returned without a cure. For strength was restored to the lame, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to lepers, and life to the dead. Nay, not only men and women, but even birds and beasts, were raised from death to life."* It was likewise asserted, that, on being exposed to view in the church before he was buried, he arose out of his coffin, and lighted the wax tapers which were on the altar; and that after the "*requiem*" for the repose of his departed spirit was chanted, he held up his hand to bless the assembly. Although fifty years after the death of Becket it was the subject of a public dispute at the University of Paris, whether he was in heaven or hell—so ambiguous a point was his sanctity; some asserting that for his extreme pride he deserved to be damned—yet we find that in the year 1420, not fewer than fifty thousand foreigners, of all ages and sexes, made a pilgrimage to his

* Matt. Par. p. 87.

renowned shrine, which was enriched with a prodigious quantity of precious gems. One of inestimable value, supposed to be the most splendid in Europe, was offered at his tomb by Louis VII., of France, when he made a pilgrimage thereto.*

I have just laid before the reader a specimen of popish theology, selected, for the most part, from a work bearing the sacred impress of the Vatican, namely, the "*Acta Sanctorum.*" It requires no comment whatever to ascertain the tendency of such a production as that from which I quote. And, whilst I bless God for having mercifully led me from such polluted streams to slake my thirst at the pure fountain of living water, yet I cannot but lament, when I reflect upon the melancholy procedure of many, who have bartered the saving truths of the gospel for the corruptions of the papacy, and the erring teaching of fallible men; and who have forsaken primitive religion and simplicity, to pursue paradoxical notions, outward forms, ostentatious ceremonies, and gaudy parade; vainly preferring, in the corruption of their hearts, the creed of Pius, and the tenets of

* Rapin's Hist. Engl. vol. i. p. 232 (fol. ed.) Burnet's Hist. Reform. book iii.

Trent, to the discipline of Christ, and the preaching of Paul.

It has been observed by Alban Butler, the compiler of the "Lives of the Saints," that such writings "furnish the Christian with a daily spiritual entertainment, which is not less agreeable than affecting and instructive. For in sacred biography the advantages of devotion and piety are joined with the most attractive charms of history. The method of forming men to virtue by example, is, of all others, the shortest, the most easy, and the best adapted to all circumstances and dispositions. Pride recoils at precepts, but example instructs without usurping the authoritative air of a master; for by example a man seems to advise and teach himself. In the 'Lives of the Saints' (he further adds) we see the most perfect maxims of the gospel reduced to practice, and the most heroic virtue made the object of our senses, clothed, as it were, with a body, and exhibited to view in its most attractive dress. Here, moreover, we are taught the means by which virtue is obtained, and learn the precipices and snares which we are to shun, and the blinds and by-ways in which many are bewildered and misled in its pursuit. The example of the

servants of God points out to us the true path, and leads us, as it were, by the hand, into it; sweetly inviting and encouraging us to walk cheerfully in the steps of those who are gone before us."

Again, he observes: "Neither is it a small advantage, that by reading the history of the saints, we are introduced into the acquaintance of the greatest personages who have ever adorned the world, the brightest ornaments of the church militant, and the shining stars and suns of the church triumphant; our future companions in eternal glory. . . . And in their penitential lives and holy maxims, we learn the sublime lessons of practical virtue, which their assiduous meditation on the divine word, the most consummate experience in their deserts, watchings, and commerce with heaven, and the lights of the Holy Ghost discovered to them!"

He moreover states, on the testimony of St. Austin, "That two courtiers were moved on the spot to forsake the world, and become fervent monks, by accidentally reading the life of St. Antony; that St. John Columbin, from a rich, covetous, and passionate nobleman, was changed into a saint, by casually reading the life of St. Mary of Egypt; that a Marshal of France owed

his perfect conversion to the reading of the life of St. Francis Borgia; and that Dr. Palafox, bishop of Osma, in his preface to the fourth tome of the letters of St. Teresa, relates, that an eminent Lutheran minister, at Bremen, famous for several works which he had published against the Catholic church, purchased the autobiography of that saint, with a view of attempting to confute it; but by attentively reading it over was converted to the Catholic faith!" And he finally sums up his statements with this preposterous declaration: "Whether we consult reason, authority, or experience, we may boldly affirm, that except the sacred writings no book has reclaimed so many sinners, or formed so many holy men to perfect virtue, as that of the Lives of the Saints!"*

"O for delusion. O for error still!"

That prepotency which Alban Butler claims for the biography of Romish saints, a modern French divine demands for cloisteral establishments. Making use of vain taunts with reference to Protestant England, he boastingly exclaims: "Your Universities and Societies of

* Preface to Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints.

the learned have produced a number of men of rare merit and extensive genius—the Newtons, the Lockes, the Addisons, the Clarkes, the Sherlocks, the Louths, the Lardners, the Kennicots, the Paleys, the Broughams, etc. But is it not worthy of remark, that these Protestant schools of learning never produced a John of Matha,—a Peter of Nolasco,—a Bernard of Menthon,—a Peter of Betancourt,—or a Vincent of Paula?"* This enthusiastic abbé certainly should have completed the noble catalogue by adding—an Antony of Coba,—a Mecarius of Alexandria,—a Simeon Stylites,—or a Francis of Assissi!

I cannot more appropriately bring the present chapter to a close, than by citing from the writings of one who had been a Romish priest. Alluding to monkish institutions and legends, he observes: "The doctrine of pretended miracles, extraordinary visions, saints, relics, etc., have had a wonderful effect in bestowing an assumed excellence and sanctity on the Romish Church. Now, of all places, convents are best adapted for such impositions and priest-craft. If brother Bonaventure or father Anthony

* *Vide* "Nuns and Monastic Institutes," published by the Catholic Institute of Great Britain.

happened to die, although during their whole life they behaved like vagabonds, still every friar in the community would swear black was white in favour of his canonized brother, and afterwards write volumes of lies on the heroic exploits, spiritual triumphs, nocturnal watchings, fasting, and discipline, by which this man of God subdued the carnal mind, and in despite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, bore off the meritorious palm of victory. The truth of this assertion is fully illustrated in every page of the Romish Breviary. Almost every saint commemorated in that compilation, belonged to some order of monks or friars. And, indeed, the contests for superiority amongst the several orders, have been frequently carried to such excess as to throw whole communities into confusion. I have never been inclined to go to the trouble of ascertaining by a calculation which of them all can boast of the greatest number; but I have been assured by a jolly old Capuchin, who could repeat the Breviary from beginning to end, but knew nothing else, that the Franciscans, in which he was included, mustered by far the greatest body; a circumstance which, at the same time, does them very little credit. We know, however, that Metaphrastes,

the inventor of this fictitious biography, was determined, for the better circulation of his work, to give full scope to his imagination, and excite the astonishment of his readers with a detail of the extraordinary wonders and miracles of his several saints, and that it was, in those days, a prevailing custom in the monasteries to propose the life of some particular sanctified brother, as a theme or subject of composition, with a premium bestowed on the person who would, by a description of the most austere penances, and miraculous actions, exalt his hero to the highest pinnacle of excellence and perfection. It is extraordinary that men who call themselves Christians, and the teachers of a Christian gospel, should in any shape countenance the circulation of such monstrous fables!"*

* Papal Impositions, &c. by the Rev. M. Brenan.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERNICIOUS TENDENCY OF MONACHISM, VIEWED IN A MORAL, PHYSICAL, AND SCRIPTURAL LIGHT.

Solitariness is the sly enemy that doth most separate a man from well-doing.

I NOW proceed to delineate some of the unsightly features of monachism—a superstition begotten of religious fanaticism, in the formation of which the demon of ingenuity had lent his devoted aid, and which has long been fostered by a corrupt communion of men, and held forth to the gaze of an astonished world as a system intrinsically noble and divine; fraught with the choicest blessings to its professors, as well as to the Christian community at large; and from which, to borrow the questionable phraseology of archbishop M'Hale, "the odour of sanctity is diffused throughout the earth." But every unprejudiced mind,

which has thoroughly investigated monachism in its bearings both upon society and religion, must, I am persuaded, form a very opposite and a more correct conception. For never, I am decidedly convinced, was there a system devised by the head of man, aided by evil agency, under the specious garb of godliness, from which so many sad disorders, and so much rank impiety have emanated. Well, truly, might the papal church endeavour, at the sacrifice of honesty and truth, to exalt and cast a sanctimonious veil over her monastics and their vices; for they have been, and still are, the most zealous propagators of her errors, and the most devoted disseminators of her iniquitous impostures and deceits.

"Wild as the wave, and wandering as the wind,
No art can tame her, and no chains can bind."

To the lay Romanist a retreat such as the monastic state affords, has a peculiar attraction; and intoxicated with the air of solemnity that pervades the cloister, he vainly imagines undisturbed peace to reign within its walls, and unalloyed happiness to possess and influence its inmates. After some consideration, he is induced to become a "religious;" and stoic-like, severs every social and domestic tie from

his bosom. The new mode of life he has adopted appears pleasant at first, for it has all the power of novelty to charm. He finally receives the "religious habit," and binds himself by vows the most solemn to his monastery. Soon he regrets the undue step he has taken; but no alternative remains. He feels the routine of discipline to which he is subjected becoming daily more monotonous and distressing; and discovers, when too late, that he had acted injudiciously by imposing upon himself a burthen greater than he had ability to sustain. At length he becomes remiss and negligent; and, finally, actuated by a distaste for such a calling, he casts off whatever semblance of religion he possesses, and becomes either an infidel or a rationalist. Hence the manifold disorders which, in every age, have disgraced and rendered odious the monastic profession.

Many there are who enter monastic inclosures with feelings of rapturous delight; fondly expecting to realise a hiding place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, and a secure haven,

Where no wind can reach them, and no wave can harm,

but who afterwards discover, to their unutter-

able sorrow, that they have followed the "ignis fatuus" of their own imagination, that they are more tempest-tossed than ever, and that instead of landing safely on a sheltered island, they have but alighted on a dangerous quick-sand.

The opinion of all, who do not take a contracted view of the subject, concurs with the Divine record, that "it is not good for man to be alone," and that monkish indolence and solitude are incompatible with the purposes for which man, as a social being, was originally created. The authority of interested churchmen and zealous bigots weighs not a feather in the scale, when put in juxta-position with the words of Him, whose wisdom is infinite, whose mercy is unbounded, and the revelation of whose will must for ever put to silence the uninspired dogmas of popes, councils, and fathers.

The monastic life is a state of the severest bondage, as it binds its weighty yoke and galling chains upon the minds as well as the bodies of its victims; and by the authoritative injunction of a blind submission to the dictates of a superior, renders the exercise of thought

and reason superfluous and criminal. Rational and innocent amusements are prohibited as inconsistent with a religious profession; and, therefore, the youngest postulant is compelled to assume the sour and studied gravity of the oldest professed monk in the community. Hence arise, from undue restraint, incalculable moral as well as physical evils. And many there are who have entered monastic retreats virtuous and moral, but who afterwards abandoned these asylums with feelings of disgust; and exhibited, by their immoral practices in after life, the fearful consequences of imposing too great a burthen upon the young, and denying them the means of rational enjoyment, so reconcilable with the theory of Scripture and the principles of philosophy.

An eminent writer alluding to the large amount of moral evil which invariably results from the prohibition of innocent amusements, thus observes:

"People should be guarded against temptation to unlawful pleasures by furnishing them with the means of innocent ones. In every community there should be pleasures, relaxations, and means of agreeable excitement; for if innocent ones be not furnished, resort will

be had to criminal. Man was made to enjoy as well as to labour, and the state of society should be adapted to this principle of human nature." *

The extraordinary monk of Wittemberg, Martin Luther, who by his teaching had shaken the papacy to its centre, exhibits the insufficiency of the monastic state to afford peace to the conscience of those who embrace it. Commenting upon the words of the apostle, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law," he thus writes:

"What I here say from St. Paul's words, I have learned by my own experience, and that of others, in the monastery. I have seen many, who, with the utmost diligence and scrupulosity, have omitted nothing which might pacify conscience; have worn hair-cloth, fasted, prayed, afflicted, and exhausted their bodies by various severities; so that, even if they had been made of iron, they must at length, have been destroyed. Yet the more they laboured, the more fearful they became. And especially as the hour of death drew nigh, they were so full of trepidation, that

* Dr. Channing.

I have seen many murderers, condemned for their crimes, meet death with more confidence than these persons who had lived so strictly." *

Further, speaking from personal experience, the Reformer observes :

"When I was a monk, I endeavoured as much as possible to live after the strait rule of my order. I was wont to confess myself with great devotion, and to reckon up all my sins, being always very contrite before ; and I returned to confession very often, and thoroughly performed the penance that was enjoined me. Yet for all this my conscience could never be fully satisfied, but was always in doubt, and said, this or that thou hast not done rightly : thou wast not contrite and sorrowful enough : this sin thou didst omit in thy confession, and so forth. Therefore, the more I went about to help my weak, wavering, and afflicted conscience, by men's traditions, the more weak, and doubtful, and the more afflicted I was. And thus the more I observed men's traditions, the more I transgressed them, and in seeking after righteousness by mine order, I could never attain unto it." †

* Luther's Comment. on Galatians.

† *Vide* Blanco White's Preservative against Popery.

And in an epistle to George, Duke of Saxony, Luther says: "Truly I was a pious monk, and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can tell. If ever monk had got to heaven by monkery, I had been that monk. In this all the monks of my acquaintance will bear me witness. Had the thing continued much longer I had become a martyr unto death, through vigils, prayer, reading, and other labours." *

Luther's account of himself is fully borne out by the distinguished historian of the Reformation, D'Aubignè, who states, "that the young monk studied so closely and ardently that he often omitted to say his office during two or three weeks. Then becoming alarmed at the thought of having transgressed the rules of his order, he shut himself up to make amends for his negligence, and commenced conscientiously repeating all the omitted hours, without thinking of meat or drink. On one occasion his sleep went from him for seven weeks." †

The annexed account of monkish fraud and imposition, cited from D'Aubignè's Reformation,

* Luth. Op. w. xix.

† Hist. Reform. book ii. ch. 3, vol. i.

I now introduce, in order to exhibit a few of the crying evils which have emanated from the sacred recesses of the cloister :—

"In 1507 (writes the renowned historian) great excitement prevailed in the town of Berne. A young man of Zurzach, named John Jetzer, having one day presented himself at a Dominican convent, had been repulsed. The poor youth in despair had returned to the charge, holding in his hand fifty-three florins and some pieces of silk. 'It is all I possess,' said he, 'take it, and receive me into your order.' He was admitted on the sixth of January among the lay brothers. But the very first night a strange noise in his cell filled him with terror. He fled to the Carthusian convent, but was again sent back to that of the Dominicans.

"On the following night, being the eve of the feast of St. Matthew, he was awoke by deep sighs, and perceived at his bedside a tall phantom in white. 'I am,' said a sepulchral voice, a soul escaped from the fire of purgatory.' The lay brother trembling, replied, 'God save you; for me, I can do nothing.' Then the spirit advanced towards the poor friar and seizing him by the throat, indignantly upbraided

him with his refusal. Jetzer in terror exclaimed, 'What then can I do to save you?' 'Flagellate yourself for eight days till the blood comes, and lie prostrate on the pavement of the chapel of St. John.' So answered the spirit, and disappeared. The lay brother gave information of the apparition to his confessor, a preacher of the convent, and by his advice submitted to the discipline required. The rumour soon spread throughout the town that a soul had applied to the Dominicans to be delivered from purgatory. The Franciscans were deserted, and every one ran to the church to see the holy man lying prostrate on the ground. The soul from purgatory had intimated that he would reappear in eight days. On the night appointed, it in fact, did appear, accompanied by two other spirits that were tormenting it, and howling horribly. 'Scotus,' said the spirit, 'Scotus, the inventor of the Franciscan doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, is among those who like me are suffering these fierce pains.' At this news, which soon spread over Berne, the partisans of the Franciscans were still more alarmed. The spirit on disappearing had announced a visit from the Virgin herself.

On the day appointed, the astonished friar saw Mary herself appear in his cell. He could not believe his eyes. She approached him kindly, gave him three of our Saviour's tears, three drops of his blood, a crucifix, and a letter addressed to pope Julius II., 'who,' said she, 'was the individual chosen by God to abolish the festival of her pretended immaculate conception.' Then coming still closer to the bed on which the friar lay, she announced, in a solemn tone, that a great grace was to be conferred on him, and drove a nail into his hand. The lay brother uttered a loud shriek, but Mary wrapt up his hand in a piece of linen which her Son, she said, had worn after his flight into Egypt. This wound was not sufficient to make the glory of the Dominicans equal to that of the Franciscans. Jetzer must have the five wounds of Christ and of St. Francis, in his hands, feet, and side. The four others were inflicted, and then, after giving him a draught, he was placed in a hall hung with pictures representing our Saviour's passion. Here, having spent whole days of fasting, his imagination soon became heated. The doors of the hall were then thrown open, from time to time, to the public, who came

in crowds to contemplate, with devout astonishment, the friar with his five wounds, stretching out his arms, bending his head, and by his positions and gestures imitating the crucifixion of our Lord. Sometimes, out of his wits, he foamed, and seemed about to breathe his last. The whisper went round, 'He is enduring the cross of Christ.' The multitude, eager for miracles, continually thronged the convent. Men worthy of high esteem, were overawed, and the Dominicans, from the height of the pulpit extolled the glory which God was bestowing on their order.

"This order had for some years felt the necessity of humbling the Franciscans, and of augmenting the respect and liberality of the people by means of miracles. Berne, 'a simple, rustic, and ignorant town,' as the sub-prior of Berne described it to the chapter held at Wimpfen, had been selected as the theatre of their operations. The prior, sub-prior, preacher, and purveyor of the convent, had undertaken to perform the leading characters, but they wanted the talent necessary to perform them to the end. A new apparition of Mary having taken place, Jetzer thought he recognised the voice of his con-

fessor, and, having said so aloud, Mary disappeared. She soon made her appearance again, to censure the incredulous friar. 'This time it is the prior,' exclaimed Jetzer, rushing forward with a knife in his hand. The saintess threw a pewter plate at the poor friar's head, and likewise disappeared.

"In consternation at the discovery which Jetzer had thus made, the Dominicans tried to disencumber themselves of him by means of poison. He perceived it; and, having taken flight, disclosed the imposition. They put on a good countenance, and sent deputies to Rome. The pope committed the decision to his legate in Switzerland, and the bishops of Lausanne and Sion. The four Dominicans being convicted, were condemned to be burnt alive; and on the first day of May, 1509, were consumed by the flames, in presence of more than thirty thousand spectators. The affair made a noise throughout Europe; and by unveiling one of the worst sores of the church, prepared the Reformation." *

It would exceed the powers of language to censure, in terms sufficiently expressive, the

* Hist. Reform. vol. ii. book. 8. c. ii.

monastic system; so pernicious to society, so injurious to those who embrace such a state, so dishonouring to the command of heaven, and so opposed to the vicarious work of Christ. Conceive for a moment the position of a young person, possessing vigour of mind, and a lively imagination, inclosed within the walls, and enveloped in the solitariness of the cloister; never again to mingle with the fond and endearing associates of early life, but to glide down the current of existence forgotten, unlamented, and unknown. Who will not shudder at so affecting a contemplation? What! to forsake home, kindred, and friends, and to become immured in conventual solitude, apart from the common family of mankind! Can this be anything but fanaticism? Can this be true religion? Can this be according to the divine purpose of the Creator, who did not bring us into being with the view that we should bury ourselves in secluded dwellings, and thereby become unprofitable to ourselves and to society, and dead in a civil point of view?* Undeniably

* The monastic profession is a kind of civil death, which, in all worldly matters, has the same effect with the natural death. The Council of Trent has fixed sixteen years for the age at which a person may be admitted into the monastic life. *Ency. Brit.*

not! The wisdom of heaven never designed or contemplated such a scheme. For, as a learned writer observes, "a wise and intelligent author must propose some end in the production of things; but the end, whatever it was, could never be promoted by indolence and sloth. Non-activity is the next to non-existence, and could no more answer any useful purpose. A production of stupid, unmoving, passive beings, could be no other than a general chaos, which could prove of no farther utility than as affording matter for future motion, harmony, and order."*

It is sad enough when the anxious enthusiast becomes so deluded, as to embrace with eagerness the monastic state, wherein he anticipates the realization of his vain and sanguine expectations, unhappily but too frequently frustrated. But, is it not horrifying to think that individuals, whose inclinations and feelings revolt at, and are entirely adverse to, such a retreat, should be compelled, as well by intimidation as entreaty, to adopt so ungenial a condition. I have witnessed an instance of this cruelty; and cruelty is by far too mild a term for such a barbarous mode of driving

* Dodwell.

human beings to become saints, by immuring them in monkish retirement.

A Roman Catholic curate, with whom I was on terms of intimacy, had a sister, an intelligent and interesting young lady, residing with him. In consequence of slender pecuniary resources, he determined upon resigning his dwelling, and taking up his future abode with the priest of the parish. His first step, therefore, was to solicit, and finally to compel, his sister to enter a community of inclosed nuns in the same town where I, when a novice, was located. Notwithstanding her repeated refusals and entreaties, and the interposition of a younger brother, who had just returned from Maynooth College for the vacation, she was compelled, though in all the bitterness of grief, to comply with the priest's unnatural demand! Previous to her entering the convent, she declared to me how painful it was to her feelings, and how deeply it wounded her heart, to be obliged to become incarcerated as a nun in opposition to her inclinations. Frequently have I beheld her bathed in tears, and indulging in secret the grief of her heart, at the consideration of the unhappy destiny that awaited her. This young

lady still remains in the gloomy cloister, having taken perpetual vows, and received the black veil—fit emblem of that sorrow, which in all probability consumes, like a canker, the heart of her who wears it! This is not a solitary instance of the barbarity exercised in order to compel persons to become secluded from the world; although many who are ignorant of the system, foolishly imagine that the act is a voluntary one. "Thus in Rome, even the signification of words is changed; weakness, which yields to force, is termed *docility*, and the *yes* extorted by violence, is called *consent!*"

The following truly affecting narrative of the sufferings and wretchedness of a nun, is related by the Rev. Blanco White:—

"The eldest daughter of a family intimately acquainted with mine, was brought up in the convent of Saint Agnes, at Seville, under the care of her mother's sister, the abbess of that female community. The circumstances of the whole transaction were so public at Seville, and the subsequent judicial proceedings have given them such notoriety, that I do not feel bound to conceal names. Maria Francisca Barreiro, the unfortunate subject of this account, grew up a

lively and interesting girl, in the convent; while a younger sister enjoyed the advantages of an education at home. The mother formed an early design of devoting her eldest daughter to religion, in order to give her less attractive favourite a better chance of getting a husband. The distant and harsh manner with which she constantly treated Maria Francisca, attached the unhappy girl to her aunt by the ties of the most ardent affection. The time, however, arrived when it was necessary she should either leave her, and endure the consequences of her mother's aversion at home, or take the vows, and thus close the gates of the convent upon herself for ever. She preferred the latter course; and came out to pay the last visit to her friends. I met her, almost daily, at the house of one of her relations; where her words and manner soon convinced me that she was a victim of her mother's designing and unfeeling disposition. The father was an excellent man, though timid and undecided. He feared his wife, and was in awe of the monks; who, as usual, were extremely anxious to increase the number of their female prisoners. Though I was aware of the danger which a man incurs in Spain, who tries to dissuade a young woman

from being a nun, humanity impelled me to speak seriously to the father, entreating him not to expose a beloved child to spend her life in hopeless regret for lost liberty. He was greatly moved by my reasons; but the impression I made was soon obliterated. The day for Maria Francisca's taking the veil was at length fixed; and though I had a most pressing invitation to be present at the ceremony, I determined not to see the wretched victim at the altar. On the preceding day, I was called from my stall at the Royal Chapel, to the confessional. A lady, quite covered by her black veil, was kneeling at the grate through which females speak to the confessor. As soon as I took my seat, the well-known voice of Maria Francisca made me start with surprise. Bathed in tears, and scarcely able to speak without betraying her state to the people who knelt near the confessional box, by the sobs which interrupted her words, she told me she wished only to unburden her heart to me before she shut herself up for life. Assistance, she assured me, she would not receive; for rather than live with her mother, and endure the obloquy to which her swerving from her determination would expose her, she would risk the salvation of her soul! All my

remonstrances were in vain. I offered to obtain the protection of the archbishop, and thereby to extricate her from the difficulties in which she was involved. She declined my offer, and appeared as resolute as she was wretched. The next morning she took the veil, and professed at the end of the following year. Her good aunt died soon after; and the nuns, who had allured her into the convent by their caresses, when they perceived that she was not able to disguise her misery, and feared that the existence of a reluctant nun might by her means transpire, became her daily tormentors.

"After an absence of three years from Seville, I found that Maria Francisca had openly declared her aversion to a state, from which nothing but death could save her. She often changed her confessors, expecting comfort from their advice. At last she found a friend in one of the companions of my youth; a man whose benevolence surpasses even the bright genius with which nature has gifted him: though neither has been able to exempt him from the evils to which Spaniards seem to be fated in proportion to their worth. He became her confessor, and in that capacity, spoke to her daily. But what could he do against

the inflexible tyranny in whose grasp she languished?

"About this time the approach of Napoleon's army threw the town into a general consternation, and the convents were opened to such of the nuns as wished to fly. Maria Francisca, whose parents were absent, put herself under the protection of a young prebendary of the cathedral, and by his means reached Cadiz, where I saw her, on my way to England. I shall never forget the anguish with which, after a long conversation, wherein she disclosed to me the whole extent of her wretchedness, she exclaimed, 'There is no hope for me!' and fell into convulsions.

"The liberty of Spain from the French invaders was the signal for the fresh confinement of this helpless young woman to her former prison. Here she attempted to put an end to her sufferings by throwing herself into a deep well, but was taken out alive. Her mother was now dead, and her friends instituted a suit of *nullity of profession*, before the ecclesiastical court. But the laws of the Council of Trent were positive; and she was cast in the trial. Her despair, however, exhausted the little strength which her protracted sufferings had

left her, and the unhappy Maria Francisca died soon after, having scarcely attained her twenty-fifth year."*

Further, the system of monachism is pernicious in a *physical* sense.

Would that I were enabled to illustrate my position by other than a descriptive character, and that I could unfold the doors of the monastic and conventual cells, and array before the reader's view the dejected and solitary inhabitants. How the blanched, the pale, and the extended visage, would affect and call forth the tenderest feelings of commiseration for the unhappy victims of a superstition which demands the two-fold sacrifice of soul and body upon its unhallowed altar! *Here* would be observed the young man, whose health is gradually and imperceptibly declining,—evidently the subject of pining cares and ceaseless grief,—who, were he but in possession of correct and orthodox notions of Revealed truth, would, probably, be both an ornament and a blessing to society. And *there* would be discovered the delicate and tender maiden, who, ere scarce two summer's suns had passed over her head, was

"Like the lily,
That once was mistress of the field, and flourished,"

* Evidence against Catholicism.

whose eyes sparkled with delight, and upon whose countenance was depicted health of body and serenity of mind; now, alas! become the prey of the fell destroyer. No longer do the crimsoned cheek and beaming eye betoken a mind at ease or a healthy frame. No: these are changed now. Nothing now presents itself but the wan and dejected countenance—sad omen of extreme mental and physical suffering. And although there might be discerned in some a cheerfulness of manner, it is but an affectation of the reality—the miserable counterfeit of genuine happiness. For I have not the slightest hesitation in affirming that the deluded inmates of the cloister are positively under obligation to conceal, even from each other, the emotions of their hearts, by making it appear that they are the favoured recipients of great spiritual joy and peace, by the assumption of an urbane and facetious deportment—which literally verifies the assertion—

> "Who trust appearances oft' judge amiss,
> For outward show is but the mask of bliss."

If the monastic profession was really a state calculated to afford peace and happiness to those who embrace it, there would be ample opportunity for observing its salutary influences.

But it is otherwise; and, hence, monastics are placed under decided obligation to *assume* what any one, who has had the slightest experience of that mode of life, well knows is not consistent with the real feelings of the mind.

In drawing this picture, it was not at all necessary to heighten it by too lively a colouring. If there exists any fault, it lies in the tints not having been sufficiently vivid; for none but those who have been behind the scenes can tell what "weight of woe" these poor solitaries experience.

> "What ages of what agonies may low'r
> O'er one bruised human heart, in one brief hour,"

are peculiarly their lot to feel with all the intenseness of reality. We have an instance of this in the writings of Cassian, where he describes, from personal experience, the "*ascedia*," or listlessness of mind and body, to which such persons were exposed when they sighed to find themselves alone. Even I have known a person of considerable standing in the monastery, when his triennial vows had expired, to exclaim with all earnestness—"O how sweet is liberty!" Ah! I fear that many who are bound to their solitary cloisters give, but in vain, a similar

ejaculation, and pine beneath the blighting influence of corroding care.—

> "'Tis better to be lowly born,
> And range with humble livers in content,
> Than to be perk'd up in a glistering grief,
> And wear a golden sorrow."

I have myself, whilst in the monastery, sustained conflicts which I cannot describe—mental anguish which I shudder to contemplate—misery of soul, which all the priestly absolutions and episcopal benedictions I received could not render more endurable, or less poignant. These melancholy feelings, the effects of monastic rigour, can, doubtless, be traced to moral causes. But my ghostly father counselled me to regard my distress of mind, my disquietude of conscience, and the extreme distaste which I experienced for the profession of a monk, as the wiles of the enemy to ensnare my soul, and entice me into the world, where my salvation would be endangered, and my anticipation of a blissful futurity rendered, perhaps, abortive. Accordingly, he had recourse to an opiate in order to administer relief to my burdened spirit. But it failed to be efficacious. This was by placing me under solemn obligation to read, in an audible tone of voice, the life of Saint

Antony of the desert—one of the greatest fanatics the world ever produced—several times a-day for weeks together; until all the singular exploits of the hermit, and his repeated combats with nefarious spirits, became so impressed upon my memory that I could repeat by rote the life of Antony with the same facility that I could the pages of the Breviary. What priests, bishops, and popes, could not effect for my soul, the gospel of Christ has, at length, more than accomplished.

Such baneful influences acting on the mind must, as a natural consequence, produce physical debility and infirmity. Hear what a celebrated writer says on the subject:—

"Nothing is more clearly settled by experience, than that grief acts as a slow poison, not only in the immediate infliction of pain, but in gradually impairing the powers of life, and in subtracting from the sum of our days. I am confident that the far greater portion of human suffering is of our own procuring—the result of ignorance and mistaken views."*

Another writer, treating of this subject, remarks:—"No one can imagine what a vast number of diseases, not only functional, but

* Mr. Draper.

organic, arise simply from unpleasant passions of the mind." *

And our Reformer, Martin Luther, after describing the melancholy and dejection to which he, when a monk, was subject, observes :— "Solitude and melancholy are poison. They are deadly to all; but above all, to the young !"

There is no truth so self-evident, no proposition so axiomatic, as that the monastic system has an especial tendency to vitiate and debase the intellectual powers, and to materially injure the physical organs of man. The mind of the unhappy votary of such a system must naturally become deranged, when its designs, thoughts, and affections, are continually thwarted and suppressed. Accordingly we find, that in the sixth century, an hospital was founded at Jerusalem for such monks as were deprived of their reason. I have known some, and have been intimately acquainted with others, who entered, in rude health, within the walls of a monastic inclosure, but in a very short time began rapidly to decline, from the bad effects of a destructive system of discipline. For my own part, I yet feel the pernicious consequences of the monastic life.

* Lectures of Dr. John Elliotson, F.R.S.

It is quite rational to suppose, that those persons who, by reason of the profession they have made, are necessarily obliged to regard all natural affection as criminal, and calculated to produce disaffection of the heart towards God, can possess little, if indeed any, sentiment of love or sympathy for each other. I am in possession of various circumstances which bear me out in these remarks, but shall content myself by merely relating a few out of many examples.

On particular occasions monks have their "gala days," or seasons of festivity, when the ordinary discipline of the monastery is suspended, and when they indulge to some degree in the pleasures of the table. On one of these occasions of rejoicing, there happened to be in the monastery a professed monk who was suffering from a painful disease, and in a state of mental alienation, consequent upon the arduous nature of his monastic duties, as he himself had informed me. But amidst all the joviality and sprightliness evinced in the refectory, the agonizing groans of the suffering brother, issuing from his solitary cell, would reverberate, with thrilling sound, around the festive board; yet callous and adamantine hearts could not be

induced to put off good cheer, but were content to observe the worldly maxim, "eat, drink, and be merry," heedless of the miseries of a suffering brother. They may, indeed, give expression, now and again, to a word of sympathy, and an exclamation of "Poor fellow!" may be extorted from them; but groans calculated to rend the heart, and call forth tears of compassion from the most obdurate and unrelenting, were not sufficient to force the goblet from their lips, or to cast even one shade of sorrow upon a single countenance present. Such is a faithful picture of monkish brotherly affection!

I have also known a novice to be left without attendance or nourishment, for several hours together, although he was languishing upon the bed of sickness, and exhausted from the loss of blood occasioned by the repeated application of leeches. His disease, too, was of that peculiar nature—brought on by the state of life he had adopted—that it was likely to terminate in results horrifying to contemplate. After a lapse of many hours, the deputy-superior entered his apartment, and, with cold unconcern, observed: "O brother! I believe we have forgotten to send you any refreshment to-day!" I was present

on the occasion, and therefore am positive as to the circumstance. It is no uncommon practice for the novices in monastic establishments to be dealt with in this manner; and I am firmly persuaded that some have been hurried into eternity by treatment almost unknown to brutal or savage life.

I was residing in the same monastery with a young man, who, from long study and strict discipline, because so enervated in body, that he used repeatedly to faint in the choir during the performance of the religious exercises. Notwithstanding his delicate constitution, he was obliged to rise, even during the winter season, at the early hour of five o'clock, in common with the other monks; and was finally sent home to his friends, lest he might be an encumbrance to the institute, after having been connected with it for a number of years, and exhausted his best energies in supporting the papal cause. I have conversed with this individual several times since his removal from the monastery, and am happy to find, that he has seceded from the ranks of the apostacy, and is now in the full possession and enjoyment of gospel truth and privileges; and is preparing for the work of the ministry in the church of Christ.

God grant that many others, who are buried in cloistered solitude, may imitate his example, and "go, and do likewise."

The melancholy train of evils consequent upon the monastic profession is thus set forth by Signor Raffaele Ciocci, who was himself a Benedictine monk in Rome, and who speaks from painful experience, as well as from knowledge of the facts, which he describes.* He observes:—

"I was, as had been announced to me, shut

* Those who have read Mr. Ciocci's book, entitled, "Narrative of Iniquities and Barbarities practised at Rome, in the Nineteenth century," will remember that that gentleman escaped from Rome with a passport in the name of his servant, and in the guise of the character which he had assumed. Under the impression that the civil influence of the papacy extended beyond the Italian states, Mr. C. travelled as Francisco Cesanelli (his servant's name) until he reached England. An Italian priest, at that time resident in London, ascertained at the custom house, that Mr. Ciocci had landed in this country under the name of "Cesanelli," and immediately transmitted the information to Rome. The servant who had so devoted himself to his master's interests, was immediately arrested and placed in confinement. Mr. Ciocci had caused inquiries to be instituted at Rome, respecting his fate; these, although most minute, were unsuccessful. The silence of the iniquitous and terrible Inquisition prevailed; even his wife and children were ignorant of the fate of one so dear to

up for fifteen days in solitude in my room, in order that I might devote myself entirely to religious exercises. After ten days of rigorous confinement—for even my food was brought to my chamber—I became ill—my feet swelled—I was oppressed with nausea, and constant pain in the head—if I attempted to walk, after taking

them. The family, after the sale of their few effects, were compelled to betake themselves to a mendicant life in the streets of Rome. Suddenly, either because pity entered the stony heart of the Inquisition, or else that his given term of imprisonment had expired, Cesanelli was lately cast forth from his dungeon, and found a miserable beggar in the streets of the idolatrous city. All shunned him; no one would employ a man who had been visited with the displeasure of the Inquisition, and who was under the *surveillance* of the police. The account Cesanelli gives of his confinement is, that he was placed in a dungeon under the castle of St. Angelo, twenty feet beneath the surface of the earth. In size it was about six feet square, with a soft, muddy bottom. The only furniture was a table for sleeping on. In this gloomy dungeon, worthy of the palmiest days of the Inquisition, fed on bread and water, with a small quantity of meagre soup three times in the week, without a change of linen or clothes, not allowed the privilege of washing or shaving, his hair suffered to grow, not permitted to speak to any one, with an iron ring encircling his waist, and another his right leg, and chained to the wall, in a condition worse than that of a savage beast, Cesanelli was compelled to pass upwards of two years. *Protest. Mag. March*, 1846.

a few turns, I grew dizzy, and was compelled to throw myself upon the bed; and it frequently happened, that being unable to reach it, I fell fainting to the ground, but no one came to my assistance. These indispositions were, no doubt, the effect of want of light, and air, and exercise."

He thus touchingly describes the emotions of his mind when a monk:—

"The three days solitude to which I was condemned in the agitated state of my feelings, writhing under the discovery of the cruel deception of which I had become a victim, and which had forced me on to a step that might prove irrevocable, almost distracted me. I had, during this confinement, ample time for reflection, but not one sustaining hope brought comfort to my soul. Now and then the thought of God would flash upon my mind, like the polar star upon the gaze of a tempest-tossed seaman, but instantly it was lost behind the thick clouds of impenetrable darkness, with which the Romish religion has clothed the God of mercies. Educated to look upon Him as a God of terror, rather than of love—ready to hurl to the nethermost pit all who dared to oppose their will to the dispensations of the Church, what

hope was left to me of finding shelter beneath his wings? Meditation served but to thicken the clouds of my spirit, and to embitter the balm which an occasional gleam of divine intelligence shot into my soul; clipping the wings of hope, it plunged me yet deeper into despair. I was upon the rocks of Gilboa, cursed by God, upon which no herbage ever springs, and where the fertilizing dews of morning never descend. Three days of almost total abstinence—my only sustenance being a morsel of bread and a little water—added physical debility to mental suffering, and brought on an indisposition to sleep, which was the more intolerable that it prolonged the sense of my sorrowful existence. When, for a few minutes, exhausted nature triumphed, my dreams were such as may be supposed to disturb the sleeping hours of one occupied with the single idea of terror. My prayers were weak, not the sisters of hope, not founded upon that faith which moves mountains. I prayed because I felt the need of prayer, because I was accustomed to it; but a voice continually repeated to me, 'God does not listen to thee, for thy prayers are not in accordance with his will!'

He further remarks:—

"At the end of six months I was seized with a fever, which, for three months, confined me to my room. The physicians pronounced my disease to be consumption. I, at this time, became acquainted with Dr. Riccardi, a most kind and excellent man, who was unremitting in his attention towards me during the whole of my lingering illness, and of whom I now speak with warm feelings of gratitude. To him I opened the sorrows of my heart, and spoke to him unreservedly of my aversion to the monastic state. He sympathized in my feelings, and, during our conversation one day, observed: —'I have attended in this monastery for ten years, and also in many other religious houses, and in all I discover youths who, like you, have been lamentably deceived; I hear the same complaints, I am called upon to cure the same disease, and oh! in how many instances have I known it to prove fatal!'"

He thus speaks of the attempt made to poison him:—

"Towards the middle of the third year, I was one evening after supper seized with frightful spasms in the stomach. A burning heat in the chest and throat, which kept rapidly increasing, led me to suspect the cause of this sudden

illness. In a short time I became of a livid colour, and foamed at the mouth. On seeing around me the monks, who had hastened to my cries, I turned towards them, exclaiming, 'You have your revenge! Death will soon terminate my misery; but I esteem you less cruel in treating me thus, than in having sacrificed me by deception!' None of the remedies administered afforded me the slightest relief. All my companions were affected to tears at the sight of my sufferings. 'My mother, my mother!' I exclaimed, 'let me, I intreat you, see her once again before I die, ... and my father, my brothers, my sisters, let me embrace them all.' The most sympathizing of those around me, strove, by every means in their power, to calm and console me. Seeing that the paroxysms increased, they became alarmed for my reason, and fearing lest in an agony of despair I might attempt my own life, they removed from my room every object which could be made use of for that purpose! But, alas! other torments awaited me. The master asked if I would confess, and pressed it upon me as a duty. I replied, that my faults were known to God, and before him I confessed my nothingness, my sinfulness, but not to man. Instantly I heard

a murmur of horror; some exclaimed, 'Blasphemy!' others 'Heresy, heresy!' and many, 'Poor fellow, his sufferings have deprived him of his senses!' The superior thought it expedient to represent that I was possessed by a legion of demons. No sooner was this opinion expressed than the most superstitious ran in haste to the church, and returned loaded with Romish merchandize, *the vase of holy water, Agnus Dei, blessed chaplet in articulo mortis, images, relics.* One sprinkled me on one side, another on the other. Some presented me with images, others placed relics on my forehead, and by the superior I was '*exorcised.*' The greater their exertions to grapple with the evil one, the stronger were the evidences of 'possession.'

"Of all the relics presented to me, the one they looked upon with most faith was that of St. Peter the martyr. Although I had not entirely rejected the adoration of saints, St. Peter of Verona, called the martyr, I especially abhorred. This saint, the finest fruit of the Dominican tree, was an inquisitor, who for having subjected a province to fire and sword, pretending to teach the way to heaven by the light of funeral piles, fell a victim to the just

vengeance of a persecuted people. I never had entertained the slightest sympathy for him, and now, after having studied the gospel, how could I believe that it was in the power of a pope to make a homicide enter heaven, when St. Paul, in the name of God, tells us, 'that murderers shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.' The pope pretends that this power is included in the '*sana totum quodcunque ligaveris.*' Imagine with what feelings I must have beheld the bones of this blood-thirsty bigot offered to me as something celestial. With all my force I thrust aside the hand of the superior, who presented the relic. He insisted upon my kissing it, esteeming it the most efficacious means whereby to chase the demon of blasphemy, which he said he perceived on my lips—the saint having been so zealous an exterminator of heresy.

"Whilst these things were going on, the physician arrived. His countenance was new to me. They told me that in consequence of the urgency of the case, they had called in a doctor of the neighbourhood. He gave me a glass of medicine, which he had brought with him, and I swallowed it with hope. A few minutes after, instead of being relieved, my

pains became more intolerable, and the heat in my throat increased. I then insisted on their summoning the ordinary physician, who was, I knew, my friend. Dr. Riccardi came. Having inquired into the nature of the attack, he took from the table the phial that had contained the medicine I had swallowed, and having examined the few remaining drops, he shuddered, and with a mysterious and significant 'Ah!' threw it out of the window, quickly preparing for me another medicine, which I drank in his presence. He then left, and a violent sickness brought me the wished-for relief. After three hours he returned, and ordered that I should be placed in a hot bath, and from thence conveyed to a warm bed. This induced perspiration, which completed the happy change that the medicine had already produced; and, contrary to the expectations of my persecutors, I escaped from the jaws of death."

Again, illustrating by sad examples, the physical evils resulting from a monastic life, he goes on to say:—

"The monk Stramucci was sent to the monastery of San Serverino nella Marche, where owing to the insalubrity of the situation, or from some other cause, in the course of a few

months, he was from a robust man reduced to a skeleton. D. Andrea Gigli, curate in the monastery of Chiaravalle, was called to Rome. He was then in the enjoyment of excellent health, but in a short time his appearance was strangely altered; and after gradually sinking for two months, he was one morning found in his bed a corpse. We were in the same college, and I was an eye-witness to the fact. D. Eugenio Ghioni remained in Rome; but after four months he also sunk into his tomb at the age of thirty-one. D. Mariano Gabrielli, who was in the flower of youth, was, in the same manner, gradually declining for six months, and then, like the former one, died of what is called consumption. The abbot Bucciarelli, a man of herculean stature, slept with his fathers after an illness of only three days. The abbot Barti, was, after two months, attacked by a slow fever, and expired after ten days' illness. D. A. Baldiri, at the expiration of thirty-four days, was seized with violent spasms and inflammation, and went to rejoin in heaven those martyrs who had preceded him." *

I have, I conjecture, brought forward abundant evidence in support of my statements,—

* Narrative of Rome in the Nineteenth century.

evidence quite sufficient to deter any party from entering upon a profession so productive of unhappy and tragic results as that of monachism. "What need we any further witness?"

Finally, the monastic system is irreconcilable with the general tenor of Scripture.

Now I would inquire of its supporters, in what part of the Sacred Writings can be discovered even a solitary passage, warranting rational beings to immure themselves in the solitude of the cloister—to hold little or no social intercourse with their fellow-mortals, on pretence of superior sanctity and virtue—and, by the vow of celibacy, to prohibit themselves from entering into the matrimonial engagement? Where can they find the Divine testimony affording even a shadow of authority, that man can render himself justified in the sight of his Maker; or that he can weave a robe of his own righteousness, by his devotions and penitential exercises, however multiplied and self-denying. On the contrary, our blessed Lord, in his memorable sermon on the mount, addressing his beloved disciples, said: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;" and, by way of illustration, remarked: "Neither do men light a candle, and

put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." Then he concluded with this very practical application of the allegory: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* They were not directed, as the guardian of their virtue, or with the view of avoiding worldly temptations, to live apart and isolated from the common family of mankind—to build for themselves secluded dwellings—to hold no communion with unbelievers—and to let their good actions, emanating from the faith which they professed, and springing forth like mellow fruit from a well-nurtured tree, be visible and contribute solely to the edification of each other! Nothing could be more opposed to the designs of Him, whose mission was to "call sinners to repentance"—to restore the spiritually infirm—and "to seek and to save that which was lost." Neither did the blessed apostles, who faithfully executed the high commission entrusted to them, inculcate, support, or countenance any such proceeding. They walked in the sacred footsteps of their beloved Master and Lord—they were instant in proclaiming, "in

* Matt v. 14—16.

season and out of season," the blessed, saving Gospel of redeeming mercy. "Without money and without price" they invited, nay, conjured all who felt the need of its enriching influences, to come and buy—they held out no allurements by which sinners could, with impunity, indulge in their iniquities—they exhibited no vain refuges to save—but utterly repudiated anything and everything that would have the tendency of withholding the guilty from the Saviour. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" was the only, yet powerful response which they gave to appease each troubled, contrite, sin-condemned soul, oppressed with sin's destructive malady, when anxiously inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?"

Again: By vowing a life of celibacy, the design of God, in man's creation, is neutralised, inasmuch as the command of the all-wise Ruler of the universe is thereby nullified, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth."* In like manner the evidence of the inspired apostle is set at nought, "Marriage is honourable in all."† If in *all*, why not in persons making a particular profession of religion? or is the practice of religion considered by the Church of

* Gen. i. 28. † Heb. xiii. 4.

Rome to be incompatible with the duties of a married life? If so, the apostle Paul did not hold this opinion; for he could discover no reason why even a bishop should not be a married man. He thus writes: "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife." And, again, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"* Likewise, in making mention of the qualifications necessary for a deacon, the inspired penman says: "Let the deacon be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."† Furthermore, in exhorting the female portion of the Christian church, the same apostle writes: "I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully, for some are already turned aside after Satan."‡ Why, then, does the Church of Rome prohibit all her monastics and ecclesiastics from engaging in the matrimonial connection? If it were really lawful, perfectly consistent, and orderly, in bishops and deacons to take unto themselves wives in the apostles'

* 1 Tim. iii. 2-5. † 1 Tim. iii. 12. ‡ 1 Tim. v. 14-15.

days, and up to the year 385, at which period, as Nicholas Cusanus acquaints us, pope Syricius first enjoined a life of celibacy on ecclesiastics,* although it was not effectually imposed on the clergy of the Eastern church until about the close of the seventh century, nor fully established in the Roman church until the year 1074, by Gregory VII.†—why not now? If it were proper in those days of primitive fervour and simplicity, why should any mandate or ordinance of popes or councils forbid what neither our blessed Lord nor his apostles condemned or disallowed, but, contrariwise, considered as perfectly reconcilable with the exalted character and mission of a Christian pastor? Fearfully does the prediction of the apostle apply to that church which blasphemously detracts from, and "renders of none effect the word of God" by human traditions: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall *depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking *lies in*

* Post Aliquot tempora visum est. &c. Nichol. Cusan. Ep. 2. ad Boem.

† Non ante Pontificatum Gregorii VII. Anno 1074, connubium adimi sacerdotibus occidentalibus potuit. Polydor. Virg. de invent. ver. l. 5. c. 4.

hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; FORBIDDING TO MARRY!"* Well may we retort upon those who would endeavour to force such a despotic doctrine upon us, in the language of Ambrose, who flourished in the fourth century:—"*Quæ in Scripturis sanctis non reperimus, ea quemadmodum usurpare possumus?*" "How can we adopt those things which we do not find in the Holy Scriptures?"† Or, in the words of Cyril of Alexandria, who was contemporaneous with the former: Ο γαρ ακ ειρηκεν η θεια γραφη, τινα δε τροπον παραδεξομεθα, και εν τοις αληθως εχεσι καταλογισμεθα; "For how shall we receive and reckon among the things that are true, that which the Scriptures have not said?"‡

Luther in his noble "Appeal" for the Reformation, thus exhibits the evils consequent upon the celibate condition:—"Into what a state have the clergy fallen, and how many priests are burdened with women, and children, and remorse, while no one comes to their assistance? Let the pope and the bishops run their course, and let those who will go to

* 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.

† De Officiis Minist. lib. i. tom. ii. (Parisiis, 1690.)

‡ Cyril. Glaphyr. in Gen. lib. 2. (Lutetiæ. 1638.)

perdition. All very well! but I am resolved to unburden my conscience, and open my mouth freely, however pope, bishops, and others, may be offended. . . . . I say, then, that according to the institution of Jesus Christ and the apostles, every town ought to have a pastor or bishop, and that this pastor may have a wife, as St. Paul writes to Timothy.* 'Let the bishop be the husband of one wife;' and as is still practised in the Greek church. But the devil has persuaded the pope, as St. Paul tells Timothy,† to forbid the clergy to marry. And hence, evils so numerous, that it is impossible to give them in detail. What is to be done? How are we to save the many pastors who are blameworthy only in this, that they live with a female, to whom they wish with all their heart to be united? Ah! let them save their conscience! let them take this woman in lawful wedlock, and live decently with her, not troubling themselves whether it pleases or displeases the pope. The salvation of your soul is of greater moment than arbitrary and tyrannical laws, laws not imposed by the Lord."‡

* 1 Tim. iii. 2. † 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.

‡ Luth. op. (L.) xvii. Vide D'Aubigné's Hist. Reform. vol. ii. book vi. ch. 2.

Further: By making a profession of the monastic life, children are, strange to say, exempted from the duty of filial obedience.

No obligation can possibly be more binding, no command of our Creator can be more imperative than that which appertains to obedience to parents. The Almighty Lawgiver in the promulgation of his divine will to his creatures, places this command immediately after those which have a direct reference to himself, as one of secondary importance: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."* The apostle Paul reiterates the divine injunction:—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."† And in his summary of the marks of the apostacy, *disobedience to parents* takes a very prominent position.‡

The Council of Trent has established many rules for the regulation and government of monasteries, and commends these asylums as

* Exod. xx. 12. † Ephes. vi. 1—3. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 2.

receptacles of religious perfection. Hence, several are foolishly induced to enter these institutions in pursuit of happiness, and to say virtually to their parents "it is a gift (to the church) by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;" * but in the end, and not unfrequently when it is too late to attempt to free themselves from the grasp of their spiritual rulers, they are brought to see and regret the rash act which bound them to the cloister, as well as the vanity of pursuing the phantasma of monastic felicity! The most eminent Romish writers attempt to justify disobedience to parents, when the cloister is the bent of a child's inclination.

Alphonsus Liguori says, most emphatically, that if children believe they have a vocation or calling to a religious state, they are not required to *await* their parents' permission, nor even to *ask* such, if they have reason to believe they would meet with a refusal. And for the encouragement of those who have, in opposition to the will of their parents, entered a monastic enclosure, he details several melancholy circumstances connected with persons who once wore the monastic habit, but who were induced,

* Matt. xv. 5.

by filial affection, to return to the world.* It is quite evident that this doctrine is in accordance with the teaching of the Church of Rome from the fact, that all the writings of Liguori were pronounced, by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, "undeserving of censure!" which sentence, moreover, was ratified by the infallible testimony of Pius VII.

It is stated in a work of high authority, written by the celebrated Rodriguez, a Spanish Jesuit, that if parents should chance to lie in the way, or become an impediment to children anxious to embrace a "religious life," as the monkish profession is unduly termed, "*they should walk over them!*"†

I well remember, upon one occasion, conversing with a distinguished dignitary of the Church of Rome, on the propriety of engaging in the monastic profession, in opposition to the will of my mother. He stated to me, that were he similarly circumstanced, he should, indeed, solicit the maternal blessing, but it would be quite a matter of indifference to him whether he should receive a blessing or a curse.

* Ligouri's Treatise on the Love of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar.

† Rod. Christ. Perfect. vol. ii.

A Roman Catholic bishop also assured me that I was not under the necessity of complying with the parental demand! Thus it is that the word of God is set at nought by the Church of Rome and her lying teachers; for she has adopted the very same evasion of the fifth commandment, for which our Lord condemned the Jews of old! And in obedience to her teaching, the superior of the nunnery at Montreal, persuaded a novice to take the veil in opposition to the will of her mother: "*Les droits de nos parens ne sont pas devant les droits de notre religion. Quand les droits de la religion sont concernés, les droits de la nature consent.*"*

"Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou shew'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!"

"In my Virgo Μισγαμος," says Erasmus, "I hold up to reprobation those who entice young lads and girls, against their parents' wills, into monasteries, abusing their simplicity or superstition, and persuading them that there is no chance of salvation but in a monastery. If the world were not full of such anglers; if countless promising minds have not been most wretchedly buried alive in such places, which

* Slocum. Confirm. p. ii.

might have been chosen vessels of the Lord; then I have been wrong in my reprehensions. But if ever I am forced to speak out what I feel upon this subject, I will so paint the portrait of those kidnappers, and so represent the magnitude of the evil, that every one shall confess that I have not been wrong in my reprehensions, though I have not represented them with civility, lest I should afford a handle to the wicked."*

I may close this already lengthened work, though the subject is far from being exhausted, by a quotation from Milton, who, in strong and sarcastic terms, exposes the assumed power of the Keys, and rails at the absurdity of a system, which keeps in bondage the misguided and deluded votaries of the Papacy :—

"They who to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised :
They pass the planets sev'n, and pass the fix'd,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talk'd, and that first moved;
And now Saint Peter at heav'n's wicket seems
To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
Of heav'n's ascent they lift their feet, when lo,
A violent cross wind from either coast

* De Colloq. Util.

Blows them transverse ten thousand leagues awry
Into the devious air ; then might ye see
Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost
And flutter'd into rags ; then reliques, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds : all these upwhirl'd aloft
Fly o'er the backside of the world far off
Into a limbo large and broad, since call'd
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod."*

I have thus attempted, as briefly as possible, to give a condensed view of Monastic Institutions, and trust that there is nothing of obscurity in the statements I have made ; for I would regret exceedingly were the proverb, in the most remote degree, applicable to me, "*Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio.*" The size of the work precluded a more enlarged view of the interesting subject which has occupied my pen ; and I was unwilling to swell the volume to a larger extent, with the many materials, however valuable, which the annals of the Church of Rome could furnish. My principal object has been to direct public attention to facts, and not

* Paradise Lost, Book iii.

to multiply cases, condemnatory of the principles of that corrupt communion. The end will have been accomplished, if the few pages of this little work will have led the reader to view Monastic Institutions in their proper light, and to examine more minutely and attentively than he has, perhaps, hitherto done, the several instruments by which the Church of Rome has contrived to gain an ascendancy over the minds of the ignorant multitude, and to fix her throne so firmly in this unhappy country. There are, no doubt, defects of composition ; and I must throw myself on the indulgence of the reader, pleading, as an excuse, a first attempt to commit my thoughts to paper :—

> "Cum relego, scripsisse pudet, quia plurima cerno,
> Me quoque quæ feci, judice, digna lini."

As to the authorities, brought forward in support of the positions I have laid down, I can truly say, that they have not been quoted, without a strict attention to the very words of the several authors to whom reference is made. I would further add, that in an attempt to draw a picture of the abuses which have crept into the Church of Rome from age to age, until it became an unsightly mass of deformity, I have cautiously avoided setting down any thing in malice, or

magnifying errors and abominations, in themselves sufficiently gross, without any additional colouring.

I now stand at the bar of public opinion, and while I anticipate the candid and impartial judgment of those whose opinion is worthy of respect I am prepared to encounter the calumniating tongue of slander, and to hear the persecuting cry of "Apostate" from those whose system I have ventured to expose. But while conscience bears testimony that my apostacy is from error to truth, "with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of man's judgment." For "if our heart condemn us not, than have we confidence towards God."

APPEAL

TO

ROMAN CATHOLICS.

KNOWING now something of the worth of a pure Gospel, and a free Bible, I am most anxious that my Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen should also possess the same privilege, and enjoy the same liberty. I would then say to them, with all the ardour of affectionate zeal, suffer the word of exhortation. Educated for a long period within the pale of the Church of Rome, I considered her tenets, as able to save my soul, and her commands, as obligatory on my conscience. My manner of life from my youth up, to the period when I became the Lord's freeman, was in perfect accordance with the doctrines of a church, whose authority I would not presume to question. I was, in the true sense of the term, a strict Roman Catholic, considering that passive obedience on my part was a duty, the slightest breach of which

would justly expose me to the merited censures of the church of which I was a member. My allegiance to priestly domination remained unshaken, until the Lord was pleased to open my eyes, and to show me a better way. Having "acted ignorantly in unbelief, I obtained mercy;" and the work of free, unmerited, sovereign grace, was manifested in my deliverance from a bondage which had long kept my reasoning powers in chains, and deprived me of the exercise of thought—a blessing so graciously vouchsafed by the Divine Being, whose mercy is over all his works, to his accountable creatures. The scales fell from mine eyes, and the things which appertain to salvation were presented to my mind in quite a different light—"old things passed away, all things became new." I trust I was not disobedient to the heavenly guidance, but, like Saul, I was led to ask the all-important question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He, who had begun the good work, was pleased to carry it on, until the dictates of an enlightened conscience constrained me to desert the ranks of the Church of Rome, and to enrol myself as an humble soldier under the banner of the cross of Christ. I ventured to

open the Bible—the forbidden book—and to examine with attention the contents of that hitherto mysterious volume. The result was, that I became more established in my new opinions; for I found that the Scriptures bore a decided testimony against the doctrines laid down, and dogmatically enforced, by the Church of Rome; and that God's book condemned the lying fables and human inventions which I had been in the habit of considering as of divine authority. What else could I do but bow in submission to the voice of God, and reject the voice of a church, not spoken of in his word, except in the way of condemnation? When once this change took place, I felt that I could not remain silent. The doctrines, forms, and ceremonies, which had been instilled into my mind, now appeared in their true character; and having discarded them, not only as useless, but as dangerous, and destructive to the soul, the path of duty was clear; and to exercise my pen against the errors and abominations of a monastic life assumed, in my mind, the force of a religious obligation. I have done so—and I now submit this little volume to your attentive perusal, trusting that it may be instrumental in leading you,

under the Divine blessing, to reject a system of religion, not sanctioned by the word of God.

Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, this is a simple statement of my case; and I may be allowed to add, it differs nothing from the experience of all conscientious persons who, having dared to judge for themselves, have been compelled to renounce the errors of a false creed, and to take the written word of God as the only safe "rule of faith." "My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved;" that you may no longer give up your birth-right, as rational and accountable beings; but that rejecting a blind obedience to men of like passions with yourselves, you may be constrained, by the influence of Divine grace, to "search the Scriptures," and to find in them that peace, which neither priestly absolution, nor unbloody sacrifices, can possibly bestow!

> "He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,
> And all are slaves beside."

In leaving the ranks of the Church of Rome, I can with truth say, that in worldly matters I

"suffered loss." Had I been even disposed to desert the crucifix for the cross, merely from lucrative motives, no door was, or is open, by which I could enter, with a sure and certain hope of finding out the road to preferment. It may be necessary to remark, that the charge of "bribery" against converts to Protestantism, is a mere trick to stop the progress of inquiry, and to excite popular indignation against those who have had the moral courage to renounce the communion of the Church of Rome. "Converts," as they are termed, are so far from being loaded with "loaves and fishes" by the members of the Protestant Church, that they are rather looked upon with a suspicious eye; and they are often placed in a most painful position, arising, on the one hand, from the hostility of the party they have forsaken; and on the other, from the coldness and neglect of the party to which they have become attached.

I can safely appeal to the Searcher of all hearts, who knows our most secret thoughts, that no worldly interest whatever has induced me to act so decided a part, in a matter involving the interests of eternity. It is painful to my

feelings to be obliged to speak thus of myself, but I am compelled to do so; for I am not ignorant that "converts from the Church of Rome" are always charged with being guilty of desertion from selfish and interested motives. The Lord having taught me a better way, I feel that the concerns of a never-dying soul are of the first importance. Influenced by this consideration, I trust I can fully appreciate the heart-searching question put by the Saviour of sinners:—"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This is my solemn conviction, and actuated by it, I address myself to you, my Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen; and I earnestly entreat of you to shake off the trammels by which you are bound, to go to the fountain head, the word of God, and to compare the tenets of your church with the doctrines laid down by HIM in that infallible volume of inspiration. You have souls to be saved, as well as the humble individual who ventures to expostulate with you; lay aside, then, the "fear of man, which bringeth a snare"—prove all things by that unerring guide, the revelation of God's will, and "hold fast that which is good." You have

reason to suspect that man of unworthy motives, however learned and exalted in rank he may be, who would tell you, that the "written word" is insufficient for man's salvation. Does he not arraign the wisdom, justice, and mercy, of our heavenly Father, when he ventures to question the sufficiency of "the oracles of God" without the addition of the "unwritten word" of sinful and fallible man? As rational and accountable creatures, I call upon you to assert your right to the possession and perusal of that word, which contains the charter of your salvation—the title-deed of your heavenly inheritance. I call upon you to examine the doctrines of your creed by that word—to examine them as men, who are deliberating for eternity; whose everlasting welfare depends on your arriving at a saving knowledge of the true faith. Receive the affectionate admonition of one who can have no other object in view in addressing you than the good of your immortal souls. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." And may the same divine Teacher who, I trust, has graciously opened my eyes to see "the truth as it is in Jesus," vouchsafe to confer on you also the same blessed privilege, to turn you from the darkness of error and superstition,

and "to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Amen!

"————— nor distant far,
Perhaps, those days of blessings are,
When superstition's sable night
Shall yield to truth's convincing light;
The blind no longer lead the blind,
Till both one dreadful ruin find:
The Bible freely spread abroad,
Shall tell the wondrous love of God.
Praise and salvation, hand in hand,
Shall walk the borders of our land,
And sounds of violence no more
Be heard, on Erin's tranquil shore."

THE END.

T. C. Johns, Printer, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street.

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